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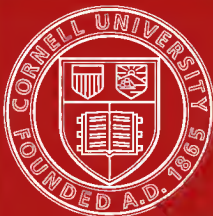


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Athenæum Press Series

THE SONNETS OF
SHAKESPEARE

WITH AN INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

H. C. BEECHING, M.A., D. LITT.

BOSTON, U.S.A., AND LONDON
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1904

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PREFACE

This edition of Shakespeare's sonnets was suggested by my friend Mr. A. C. Bradley, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, who was interested in a paper on the subject which I contributed to the *Cornhill Magazine* in February, 1902. That paper, by the good leave of the publisher, I have used as the basis of the present Introduction; and the rest of my editorial work has consisted in dividing up the sonnets into groups and annotating them. As there are already before the public not a few editions of Shakespeare's sonnets by well-known writers, I may be allowed to set out what I conceive to be the peculiarities of this edition. As its inclusion in this series implies, it is meant to be an edition for students; and therefore I have given a careful examination to the latest theories about the sonnets and the person to whom they were addressed, especially to the theory of my friend Mr. Sidney Lee, which he has expounded with so much learning in his *Life of Shakespeare*. In regard to the difficult question of date I have proposed a test, not hitherto applied, which seems capable of yielding definite results. In the Notes I have endeavoured to be just to my predecessors by referring every explanation that is not my own to its original proposer. The reader will thus be able to estimate how much the study of the sonnets owes to the learning and good sense of their first commentator, Edmond Malone. Of modern editions the best seems to me that of Professor Dowden of Dublin, whose indifference to party victories and abundant gift of humour have saved him from the chief perils that beset an editor of the sonnets. The

positive merit of his edition lies, if I may say so, in the skill with which he has paraphrased many of the more difficult lines; its chief fault he has himself pointed out in his Introduction, where he warns the reader that in setting down points of connection between one sonnet and another he has "pushed this kind of criticism far, perhaps too far." The more recent edition by Mr. George Wyndham deserves the thanks of all lovers of poetry for the resolute way in which it keeps before the reader that the one thing of importance in the sonnets is their poetry. As a critical edition it is marred by the desire to read into the sonnets much philosophy to which they are strangers, and by the determination to make sense of the Quarto text at all costs. To Mr. Wyndham's conservatism, however, is due the restoration of what is certainly the right punctuation in Sonnet 115. 14. The edition by the late Mr. Samuel Butler, author of *Erechon* , is distinguished by all the mental agility and freshness of that interesting writer, as well as by his love of paradox; but it is the edition of an amateur critic. One patent sign of its want of scholarship is the preference shown for the emendations of Staunton, who was the worst of all the nineteenth-century editors of Shakespeare's text. Mr. Butler's most useful and most interesting pages are those which he devotes to the criticism of his predecessors; his own novel theories are not worth serious consideration. Of the defects of the present edition I am fully conscious, but I leave the description of them to my successor. In anticipation, however, of a charge of needlessly attacking previous editors, I should like to say that I have thought it for the advantage of students to show not only what in any matter of debate I consider the true opinion, but why other opinions that conflict with it seem untenable. My friends with whom I find myself in disagreement will not resent my plain speaking; and any others I should like to take the

present opportunity of assuring that when I differ I do so with respect and without forgetting how much in other matters I may owe to them.

The text adopted in this edition is practically Malone's revision of the *editio princeps*, the Quarto of 1609; but all variations from the Quarto, except mere differences of spelling and punctuation, are noted. A few lines which seem to be corrupt have been marked with an obelus (†), and attempts at emendation will be found in the Notes. In an appendix I have added a critical note, originally contributed to *Literature* (August 19, 1899), upon the relation of Drayton's sonnets to those of Shakespeare, as this has a bearing upon several questions discussed in the Introduction. I have to thank two friendly scholars, Mr. J. W. Mackail, late Fellow of Balliol College, Oxford, and the Rev. Alexander Nairne, Professor of Hebrew at King's College, London, and rector of Tewin, for the pains they have spent upon the proof sheets. Professor Kittredge, one of the editors of the series, has also read them and made suggestive criticisms.

H. C. B.

LITTLE CLOISTERS, WESTMINSTER ABBEY,
Michaelmas, 1903.

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INTRODUCTION

I. THE CHIEF SUBJECT OF THE SONNETS

The first hundred and twenty-six sonnets celebrate the affection of an elder for a younger man, wherewith there mingles not a little admiration for his grace and charm. If I may put quite shortly what I conceive to be the peculiar type of this affection, I should say it was a type not uncommonly found in imaginative natures. A poet, whatever else he is, is a man with keener senses and stronger emotions than other men; he is more sensitive to beauty, especially the beauty of youth: and, as the poetry of the whole world may convince us, he is especially sensitive to that beauty's decay. Hence it is not uncommon to find in poets of mature years a strong disposition to consort with young people, and a keen pleasure in their society, as though to atone for the slow sapping of youthful strength and ardour in themselves. It is well that the majority of us should stifle our dissatisfaction at the inevitable oncoming of age by doing the tasks which age lays upon us and for which youth is incompetent. The middle-aged youth or maiden is a fair theme for satire. But poets cannot be blamed if, feeling what we feel more keenly, they give to the sentiment an occasional expression; nor if they seek to keep fresh their own youthful enthusiasm by associating with younger people. There is an interesting passage in Browning's poem of *Cleon* where Cleon, who is a poet, writing to King Protus on the subject of joy in life, contrasts his own supposed joy in the wide outlook of age with the actual joy of living; and

Browning seems there, through the mouth of Cleon, to be uttering a sentiment that many poets have felt, and that, as I believe, accounts for much in Shakespeare's sonnets.

The last point now: thou dost except a case,
 Holding joy not impossible to one
 With artist-gifts — to such a man as I,
 Who leave behind me living works indeed;
 For such a poem, such a painting, lives.
 What? dost thou verily trip upon a word,
 Confound the accurate view of what joy is
 (Caught somewhat clearer by my eyes than thine)
 With feeling joy? confound the knowing how
 And showing how to live (my faculty)
 With actually living? Otherwise
 Where is the artist's vantage o'er the king?
 Because in my great epos I display
 How divers men young, strong, fair, wise, can act —
 Is this as though I acted? if I paint,
 Carve the young Phœbus, am I therefore young?
 Methinks I 'm older that I bowed myself :
 The many years of pain that taught me art !
 Indeed, to know is something, and to prove
 How all this beauty might be enjoyed is more:
 But, knowing nought, to enjoy is something too.
 Yon rower with the moulded muscles there,
 Lowering the sail, is nearer it than I.
 I can write love-odes: thy fair slave's an ode.
 I get to sing of love, when grown too grey
 For being beloved: she turns to that young man,
 The muscles all a-ripple on his back.
 I know the joy of kingship,—well, thou art king !

That passage goes far to explain the attraction which many poets have found in the society of young people distinguished in some special degree for beauty, or grace, or vivacity. And there must not be forgotten another element in the problem, — the peculiar sweetness of admiration and praise from the young. Theocritus desired to sing songs

that should win the young, and the sentiment has been echoed by the most austere of our own living poets :

'T were something yet to live among
The gentle youth beloved, and where I learned
My art, be there remembered for my song.¹

The nearest parallel I can suggest to the case of Shakespeare and his young friend is the friendship between the poet Gray and Bonstetten. Bonstetten was a Swiss youth of quality, who went to Cambridge with an introduction to Gray from his friend Norton Nicholls; and the havoc he wrought in that poet's domestic affections is visible in his correspondence. He wrote to Norton Nicholls (April 4, 1770):

At length, my dear sir, we have lost our poor de Bonstetten. I packed him up with my own hands in the Dover machine at four o'clock in the morning on Friday, 23rd March; the next day at seven he sailed, and reached Calais by noon, and Boulogne at night; the next night he reached Abbeville. From thence he wrote to me; and here am I again to pass my solitary evenings, which hung much lighter on my hands before I knew him. This is your fault! Pray, let the next you send me be halt and blind, dull, unapprehensive, and wrong-headed. For this (as Lady Constance says) *Was never such a gracious creature born!* and yet —

Among Gray's letters are three to Bonstetten himself; it will be sufficient to quote the shortest of them.

I am returned, my dear Bonstetten, from the little journey I made into Suffolk, without answering the end proposed. The thought that you might have been with me there has embittered all my hours. Your letter has made me happy — as happy as so gloomy, so solitary a being as I am is capable of being made. I know, and have too often felt the disadvantages I lay myself under, how much I hurt the little interest I have in you, by this air of sadness, so contrary to your nature and present enjoyments; but sure you will forgive, though you cannot sympathise with me. It is impossible with me to dissemble with you; such

¹ Robert Bridges, *Growth of Love*.

as I am I expose my heart to your view, nor wish to conceal a single thought from your penetrating eyes. All that you say to me, especially on the subject of Switzerland, is infinitely acceptable. It feels too pleasing ever to be fulfilled, and as often as I read over your truly kind letter, written long since from London, I stop at these words: "la mort qui peut glacer nos bras avant qu'ils soient entrelacés."

It seems to me that in these letters we have, beneath many superficial dissimilarities, a very close parallel to Shakespeare's own case as it lies before us in the sonnets. We have a companionship marked by respectful admiration and affection on the one side, on the other by a more tender sentiment. And the other letters draw the parallel closer, for one describes the pangs of absence, —

Alas! how do I every moment feel the truth of what I have somewhere read: "Ce n'est pas le voir, que de s'en souvenir;" and yet that remembrance is the only satisfaction I have left. My life now is but a conversation with your shadow, &c., —

and another warns the youth against the vices to which his youth and good looks and the example of his own class left him peculiarly exposed. With such an actual experience to call in evidence, I do not see why we should reject as inconceivable the obvious interpretation that the sonnets put upon themselves: that Shakespeare at a certain period found the loneliness of his life in London filled up by a friendship which, not being "equal poised," could not last, but which was in no sense unworthy. It must not be forgotten, too, that romantic friendships between elder and younger men were not so unfamiliar, even in England, during the Renaissance period as they may be to ourselves. A fine and familiar instance is that which subsisted between the veteran philosopher Languet and the young Philip Sidney,¹ and in Shakespearean plays we have the friendship

¹ See the *Correspondence of Sir Philip Sidney and Hubert Languet*, translated by S. A. Pears (Pickering, 1845).

between Antonio and Bassanio in *The Merchant of Venice*, and that between Antonio and Sebastian in *Twelfth Night*. The latter is certainly as much out of key with commonplace sentiment as anything in the sonnets. Allowing such a friendship, however, it would not, of course, follow that the sonnets could be treated as one side of an ordinary correspondence, and every statement they contain be transferred to Shakespeare's biography as literal fact. The truth at which poetry aims is a truth of feeling, not of incident, and a sonnet by its very nature is a descant upon plain-song. The fact, often enough implied in the sonnets, that they were intended for publication some day (though that day was anticipated by a piratical publisher), as well as the still more cogent fact that Shakespeare was a poet, should prepare us to recognise that situations would be generalised and reduced to their common human measure.

II. THE "PATRON" AND "LITERARY EXERCISE" THEORIES

Such being, in my judgment, the view of the sonnets that will commend itself to a reader who interprets them in the light of general experience and of later sixteenth century manners, we must see how far such a view is affected by the recent investigation into the special conditions of Elizabethan sonnet writing, for which we have to thank Mr. Sidney Lee. Mr. Lee's theory is that what the ordinary reader takes for friendship in Shakespeare's sonnets is merely the conventional adulation common at the time between client and patron. "There is nothing," he says, "in the vocabulary of affection which Shakespeare employed in his sonnets of friendship to conflict with the theory that they were inscribed to a literary patron, with whom the intimacy was of the kind

normally subsisting at the time between literary clients and their patrons" (*Life of Shakespeare*, p. 141). A new theory of this sort must stand or fall by the evidence that can be produced for it, and accordingly Mr. Lee proceeds to supply parallels. "The tone of yearning," he tells us, "for a man's affection is sounded by Donne and Campion almost as plaintively in their sonnets to patrons as it was sounded by Shakespeare" (*ib.*). In support of this statement Mr. Lee refers to two poems (which we must presume to be the strongest instances he can find), one a verse letter by Donne to a certain T. W., and the other a poem by Campion addressed to the young Lord Walden. The letter of Donne's must be ruled out, because it is not written to a patron at all but to a friend. We do not know who T. W. was, but we know the names of Donne's patrons, and the initials fit none of them. In the four stanzas to Lord Walden which are prefixed, among various dedications, to one of Campion's masques, I cannot detect the least tone of yearning, or even of plaintiveness. The word "love" certainly occurs twice, but the love meant is the general love of all the world for the young gentleman's admired virtues. It may be well to quote the material verses.

If to be sprung of high and princely blood,
If to inherit virtue, honour, grace,
If to be great in all things, and yet good,
If to be facile, yet t' have power and place,
If to be just, and bountiful, may get
The love of men, your right may challenge it.

But if th' admired virtues of your youth
Breed such despairing to my daunted Muse
That it can scarcely utter naked truth,
How shall it mount as ravished spirits use
Under the burden of your riper days,
Or hope to reach the so far distant lays?

My slender Muse shall yet my love express,
And by the fair Thames' side of you she'll sing;
The double streams shall bear her willing verse
Far hence with murmur of their ebb and spring.
But if you favour her light tunes, ere long
She'll strive to raise you with a loftier song.

I do not think that the ordinary reader unbiased by a theory would hear in these conventional lines any tone of yearning for affection. If the world is to be convinced that there is nothing in Shakespeare's sonnets beyond the normal Elizabethan note of patron-worship, it will at least require by way of parallel a poem with some passion in it. Did any Elizabethan client, for example, speak of his love for his *patron* as keeping him awake at night, as Shakespeare says in the sixty-first sonnet that his love for his *friend* kept him awake?

A more specious argument is that which Mr. Lee bases on the very mysterious section of the sonnets concerned with rival poets (77-86), which he interprets as an attempt on Shakespeare's part to monopolise patronage. In the sonnets Shakespeare certainly reveals some jealousy. He charges his friend with being attracted by the flattery of some other writer of verses. But it is evident that the verses in question are not dedicated to the friend but written about him;¹ the friend is not the patron but the subject of the rival's song; so that it is not merely patronage that Shakespeare deprecates. Indeed, how could he have done so, considering the custom of the age, with any reasonable prospect of success? I would have said, How could he have done so with decency? only Mr. Lee denies him decency. He says, "The sole biographical inference deducible from the sonnets is that at one time in his career

¹ They may, of course, have included dedicatory poems printed or unprinted, as the 82d sonnet seems to imply.

Shakespeare disdained no weapon of flattery in an endeavour to monopolise the bountiful patronage of a young man of rank" (p. 159). The sonnets themselves will not, I think, bear this interpretation. It is one thing to say: "X has begun to ask your patronage for his books. I hope you will have nothing to do with him"; and quite another thing to say, as Shakespeare says: "X has been writing verses about you in which he flatters you extravagantly. Of course you like it. And I am quite willing to own that as poetry his verses are better than mine. But for all that, mine express real affection; so do not desert me for him." It is difficult to bring this matter to a more decisive test, because it is impossible to determine how far the complaint was serious and who this rival was (see Section VIII); and no verses are extant that can be reasonably supposed those in question.

Mr. Lee enumerates (p. 125) twenty sonnets which he calls "dedicatory" sonnets, in which he maintains that the friend is "declared without periphrasis and without disguise to be a patron of the poet's verse." If so, Mr. Lee uses the word "patron" in an esoteric sense. Shakespeare says again and again that his friend's beauty and constancy give his pen "both skill and argument":

How can my Muse want *subject* to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet *argument*, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse?

Surely there is all the difference in the world between the subject and argument of a book and its patron! But even supposing them to coincide, how small a proportion do these so-called "dedicatory" sonnets bear to the whole number, and how difficult it is to conceive of many of the remainder as written by a literary *protégé* to his patron! For they are not all flattering to their subject. And even of those which

are meant to be complimentary the language is often pitched in a strange key for a client to use. Could an Elizabethan patron have been told that he was "left the prey of every vulgar thief"? (48). In point of fact, the "patron" theory fails because it obliges adherents to deny that all the first group of sonnets are addressed to the same person.

A somewhat different theory, though allied to this, is that which regards the sonnets as merely literary exercises, — exercises of genius, but still exercises and nothing more. "It was a mode brought down from Petrarch, from Dante, even from earlier still, to write love poetry which, under the form of passionate affection for an individual, should give the poet an opportunity of pouring forth all his dissatisfaction with life as it is, and all his aspirations after an ideal of life as it might be. And so Surrey's praises of 'Geraldine,' Constable's of 'Diana,' Sidney's of 'Stella,' are duly followed by Shakespeare's sonnets in celebration of the mysterious personage whose identity has so much exercised a succession of critics. . . . It is really only ignorance of the other contemporary love sonnets which can account for the fancy shown by some people for taking all that is said in the sonnets as literal fact of personal and particular application."¹ The case for the "exercise" theory could not be better stated; but the reader at once sees that it is necessary to enter certain distinctions. Assuming that Petrarch's affection for Laura was a literary pose, was it always so with Italian sonneteers? Was it the case with Michael Angelo's affection for Tommaso Cavalieri? Granted that Surrey was never in love with Geraldine, is it as certain that Sidney was never in love with Stella? Was Spenser not in love with the lady to whom he wrote the *Amoretti* and whom he subsequently married? Then again, if the passion which sonneteers display were mere affectation, should we not expect

¹ Review of Wyndham's *Poems of Shakespeare* in *Guardian*.

them "duly" to elaborate their century or half century of sonnets, and then have done with it? And this we find to be the way with certain minor poets who wrote sonnets because sonneteering was the vogue. Barnabe Barnes, fired by the example of Daniel, put to press a hundred and five sonnets in 1593; Giles Fletcher senior put out three and fifty in the same year; and having satisfied the fashion they wrote no more in this vein. Sonneteering to such men was a game of skill, and having proved to their friends that they could translate or imitate their French or English models, they were content. But even so we may be sure that Barnes and Dr. Fletcher utilised whatever experience of love they possessed, and there are few men who have not had some experience of love. Samuel Daniel and Michael Drayton were more restrained in their output, and added and suppressed from edition to edition. And as their series grew from decade to decade "*Delia*" and "*Idea*" still "served to grace their measure," though perhaps *Chloe* or another was their "real flame." This idealising habit of the poets is well known, and to deny it is to be ignorant of facts. But to define in any particular instance the form which idealisation must take is impossible; and especially should we be on our guard in attempting, from the example of inferior poets, to lay down a law for men of genius. I have recalled the examples of Michael Angelo and Spenser; it would perhaps be more convincing, as nearer our own time, to recall those of Gabriel Rossetti and Elizabeth Barrett Browning. We know for a fact that many of Rossetti's sonnets were written to his wife; we know that Mrs. Browning's sonnets were written to her husband. If we did not happen to know this, we should be required on the Petrarch-Surrey theory of sonnet writing as above stated to pronounce them both mere literary exercises. Shakespeare is at any rate entitled to the benefit of the doubt.

III. THE DATE OF THE SONNETS

The next problem that presents itself concerns the approximate date of the sonnet cycle. This problem is usually discussed in relation to the question whether the Earl of Southampton or the Earl of Pembroke is the friend to whom the sonnets are addressed, because a late date makes the former an impossible candidate, and an early date disposes of the latter. But it has also a bearing upon the previous question, whether we are justified in looking in the sonnets for any genuine sentiment at all. Mr. Lee in his *Life of Shakespeare* has restated with new emphasis the fact that the sonnet was a fashionable literary form in the last decade of the sixteenth century; and he has further shown, for the first time, that a large stock of ideas and images was common to the whole tribe of sonneteers. Of course it by no means follows, because a poet uses a fashionable and artificial form of verse, that the emotion he puts into it is merely fashionable and artificial. It may be or it may not be. We must not forget that, although the sonnet was fashionable at this epoch, the passion of love had perhaps as great a vogue as the sonnet.¹ If, however, Shakespeare wrote a sequence of sonnets simply to be in the mode and to please his patron, we should expect to find him turning them out as soon as he had finished *Lucrece* in 1594; for even as early as that date Sidney, Daniel, Constable,

¹ Perhaps Mr. Lee a little overstates the case, strong as it is, for the artificiality of the emotion displayed in Elizabethan sonnets. Drayton, by calling his lady Idea, did not imply (p. 105, n.) that she was merely an abstraction, but that she was his ideal. He himself identifies her with Anne Goodere. Nor does he tell his readers (*ib.*) "that if any sought *genuine* passion in them they had better go elsewhere." His words are, "Into these loves who but for passion looks, At this first sight here let him lay them by"; and he goes on to explain *passion* by "far-fetched sighs," "ah me's," and "whining." The point of the sonnet, which is a prefatory advertisement, is that the reader may expect variety and will not be confined to the mere commonplace of amatory verse.

Barnes, Watson, Lodge, and Drayton — to mention only considerable people — were in the field before him. And in pursuance of his theory Mr. Lee places the bulk of Shakespeare's sonnets in 1594. But all the evidence there is points to a date considerably later. No reference to the sonnets has been traced in contemporary literature before 1598.¹ It was not till 1599 that two of them found their way into print in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (Nos. 138, 144). And the only sonnet that can be dated with absolute certainty from internal evidence (107) belongs to 1603. The evidence from style points also, for the most part, to a late date ;² but of that it is of no use to speak, because it convinces no one who has other reasons for not being convinced. About this matter of style something will be said in Section IX of this Introduction. There is, however, a line of argument hitherto neglected which, in competent hands, might yield material results, — the argument from repeated expressions.³ Every writer knows the perverse

¹ Francis Meres' *Palladis Tamia* : "The sweete wittie soul of *Ovid* lives in mellifluous and honeytongued Shakspeare, witnes his *Venus and Adonis*, his *Lucrece*, his sugred sonnets among his private friends." Professor Minto takes these "sugred sonnets" to be such as those in *The Passionate Pilgrim* upon the subject of *Venus and Adonis* ; but "sugred" is as much a conventional epithet as "mellifluous," and the publication of Sonnets 138 and 144 in the year following — though these may well have been among the earliest written, for the sonnets after 126 are not necessarily subsequent to the first series (see Section XI) — suggests that the sonnets to which Meres referred were some of our present collection.

² Many critics think that the first twenty-six sonnets may be as early as *Venus and Adonis*. Their affinities in point of motive are obvious, but their writing is distinctly finer than anything in the *Venus*, and the thought and experience are riper. The mastery of rhythm displayed in Sonnet 5 and the melancholy of that and Sonnet 12 point to a later date. Sonnet 24 is possibly an early one.

³ This argument must not be confused with an argument from what are called "parallel passages." It is primarily an argument from the use of identical words, only secondarily from similar ideas, though I have included a few striking instances of the latter in the list given above. Of course it is an argument that must be applied with discretion. The repeated phrase of which notice is taken must be

facility with which a phrase once used presents itself again, and Shakespeare seems to have been not a little liable to this literary habit. It is not uncommon for him to use a word or a phrase twice in a single play, and never afterwards.¹ There is a strong probability, therefore, if a remarkable phrase or figure of speech occurs both in a sonnet and in a play, that the play and the sonnet belong to the same period. Now the greater number of the parallel passages hitherto recognised are to be found in *Henry IV*, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, and in *Hamlet*; and it is certain that *Henry IV* was written in 1597, that *Love's Labour's Lost* was revised in that same year, and that *Hamlet* is later still. To take an example: the phrase "world-without-end" makes a sufficiently remarkable epithet; but it is so used only in Sonnet 57 and in *Love's Labour's Lost* (V, ii, 799). But as it is open to any one to reply that this and other phrases² may have occurred in the original draft of that play, written several years earlier, it will be best to confine the parallels to *Henry IV*, the date of which is beyond dispute. Compare, then, Sonnet 33 —

Anon *permit* the *basest* clouds to ride
With ugly rack on his celestial face —

with 1 *Henry IV*, I, ii, 221 —

the sun,
Who doth *permit* the *base* contagious clouds
To smother up his beauty from the world.

striking and individual. It would not do, for instance, to suggest that Sonnet 29 is of the same date as *Cymbeline* because in both the poet speaks of the lark as singing "at heaven's gate."

¹ Examples are *discandy* (*A. and C.*, III, xiii, 165; IV, xii, 22); *chare* (*A. and C.*, IV, xv, 75; V, ii, 231); *bear me hard* (*J. C.*, I, ii, 317; II, i, 215); *hand-some about him* (*Much Ado*, IV, ii, 88; V, iv, 105). Cf. "beating mind" in *Tempest*, I, ii, 176; IV, 163; V, 246.

² For other parallels in *Love's Labour's Lost* see the notes on Sonnets 21, 74, 102, 3, 127. 1. See also the notes to Sonnets 54, 64, 71, 106, 118, 119, 125, for the parallels referred to in the next paragraph.

Again, compare Sonnet 52 —

Therefore are *feasts* so *solemn* and so *rare*,
 Since, *seldom* coming, in the long year set

 So is the time that keeps you as my chest,
 Or as the wardrobe which the *robe* doth hide,
 To make some special instant special blest —

with 1 *Henry IV*, III, ii, 56 —

My presence, like a *robe* pontifical,
 Ne'er seen but wonder'd at; and so my state,
Seldom but sumptuous, showed like a *feast*,
 And won by *rareness* such *solemnity*, —

where the concurrence of the images of a feast and a robe is very noticeable. Compare also Sonnet 64 with 2 *Henry IV*, III, i, 45, where the revolution of states is compared with the sea gaining on the land, and the land on the sea, — an idea not found in the famous description of the works of Time in *Lucrece* (937-959). Compare also the epithet "sullen," applied to a bell in Sonnet 71 and 2 *Henry IV*, I, i, 102, and in the same sonnet the phrase "compounded with clay," or "dust," found in 2 *Henry IV*, IV, v, 116, and *Hamlet*, IV, ii, 6. The contrast between the canker or wild rose and the cultivated rose, used so admirably in Sonnet 54, is found again in 1 *Henry IV*, I, iii, 176, and also in *Much Ado About Nothing*, I, iii, 28, a play written probably a year or two years later. The very remarkable use of the word "blazon," a technical term in heraldry, of the limbs of the human body, is found twice, once in Sonnet 106, and once in *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 312, the date of which is probably 1600. Again, the idea expressed in the phrases "sick of welfare" or "rank of goodness" in Sonnet 118 is paralleled in 2 *Henry IV*, IV, i, 64, "sick of happiness," and in *Hamlet*, IV, vii, 118, "goodness growing to a plurisy," and in these plays only. The comparison of the eye in its socket to a star

moving in its "sphere" is found only in Sonnet 119 and in *Hamlet*, I, v, 17. In Sonnet 125 and in *Othello*, I, i, 63, there is a conjunction of the word "outward" with the curious synonym "extern" which occurs only in these two places. I do not wish to press this argument further than it will go, but it must be allowed that its force accumulates with every instance adduced; and, in my opinion, it is strong enough to dispose of the hypothesis that the main body of the sonnets was written in 1593 or 1594, especially as not a single argument has been brought forward for assigning them to so early a date,¹ and every indication of both internal and external evidence suggests that they were written later. One conclusion from these premisses seems to be that Shakespeare did not write his sonnets merely in pursuit of the fashion, though he recognised the fashion by introducing a sonnet occasionally into an early play, and by representing his lovers — Beatrice and Benedick, the lovesick Thurio in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, and the nobles in *Love's Labour's Lost* — as turning to the sonnet as the proper form

¹ Critics yield a doubtful assent to the idea that Henry Willobie, in his *Avisa* (1594), refers to Shakespeare, under the initials W.S., as having escaped heart-whole from a passion in which he found himself involved. The sole ground for the conjecture is that W.S. is referred to as the "old player." But the love affair had been previously spoken of as "a comedy like to end in a tragedy," and Willobie himself is called the "new actor." There is, therefore, not the slightest reason for taking the one expression more literally than the other. And where, it may be asked, is there anything in the sonnets that could be referred to as a recovery from love? Another point which would be an argument for the early date of the sonnets, if it could be supported, may be referred to here. Mr. Lee thinks Sir John Davies, in a "gulling sonnet," was parodying Shakespeare's legal phraseology in Sonnet 26. It is possible, though, considering the excesses in this respect of "Zepheria," to which Davies refers by name, it is uncertain. Mr. Lee dates Davies's sonnets in 1595 (p. 436); but they are dedicated to Sir Anthony Cooke, who, according to Grosart, was knighted at the sack of Cadiz, September 15, 1596. They must, therefore, be subsequent to that date, and they may belong to any year between 1597 and 1603, when Davies himself was knighted, for in the MSS. they are attributed to "Mr. Davyes."

in which to ease their overburdened hearts. It may have been that the impulse to write sonnets came to Shakespeare himself from a like natural cause.

IV. THE FRIEND: HIS SOCIAL STATUS

Mr. Samuel Butler in his edition of the sonnets makes very merry over the generally accepted notion that Shakespeare's friend was a nobleman. He asks whether "Lord of my love" in Sonnet 26 need mean "Earl of my love"; and more seriously whether we might not expect Sonnet 25 to open:

Let *you* who are in favour with *your* stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,

instead of "Let *those*" etc., if the friend were himself a great noble. He asks also whether "it is possible that Shakespeare should regard his own verse as the only thing that was likely to rescue his friend from oblivion, if that friend was one before whom a great career presumably lay open." In answering the last question we must keep in mind that to "eternise" its object was one of the conventions of sonnetting,¹ and in regard to the former, that the friend, whether noble or not by birth, was not of age to have merited "public honour." So, too, when Mr. Butler goes on to ask whether it is conceivable that in Sonnet 58 "Shakespeare should tell a powerful nobleman that he could not even think of controlling his liberty, or requiring him to give an account of his time," he seems to have forgotten that to friendship all things are possible, and that the friendship the sonnets reveal,

¹ See the many examples adduced by Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 115; and compare Sidney's *Apologic for Poetrie* (ad fin.), "I coniure you all . . . to believe [the poets] themselves when they tell you they will make you immortall by their verses." An Elizabethan poet would not have shrunk from saying that the noblest deeds would prove but "alms for oblivion," if they were not immortalised in song.

whether it was with noble or commoner, was very intimate. The friend's youth and the intimacy of friendship would cover also such plain speaking as we get in Sonnet 84:

You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse ;

or again in Sonnet 69 :

But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The solve [solution] is this, that thou dost common grow, —

passages which are sufficient of themselves to refute the hypothesis that the sonnets were addressed to a mere literary patron. Mr. Butler, however, does less than justice to the case of those who will have the friend to have been a person of high social position, when he says that only two sonnets (37 and 124) can be brought forward in support of it. It may be worth while to go through such of the sonnets as have been understood to predicate nobility, and see what their evidence comes to.

Sonnet 25 may be taken to show that while Shakespeare was not the favourite of a "Great Prince," he was the friend of one whom he "honoured." The point of the sonnet seems to be that, while most people find joy in receiving honour, the poet found joy in paying it. Here, however, it is open to the other side to assert that "I honour most" means not "I pay honour" but "I confer honour" (by my verses), as the word is used in Sonnet 36, "Nor thou with public kindness *honour* me"; so that the argument is inconclusive.

Sonnet 37 is discussed by Mr. Butler, who lays stress on its hypothetical character. "Shakespeare does not say 'you have beauty, birth, wealth, and wit'; he says, 'if you have any single one of these four, or if you even have them all, and others that I have not named, — whatever you may have, I shall graft my love thereon.'" Mr. Butler acknowledges that "Shakespeare would not name beauty, if his

friend was remarkably plain ; birth, if he was notoriously base-born ; wealth, if he was necessitous ; or wit, if he was next door to a fool" ; and taking advantage of that admission, we may point out that as the friend's beauty is sufficiently certified by the rest of the sonnets, the presumption is that his birth and wealth and wit are equally matters of fact. The whole point of the sonnet is that the friend had advantages of *fortune* which were denied to the poet. The sonnet opens :

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by *Fortune's* dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth ;

where "worth" must be construed in terms of what follows. This sonnet puts it beyond doubt that Shakespeare's friend was substantially above the poet in social position. It cannot be said to prove that he was a nobleman, although the word "glory" in the twelfth line is one on which stress might well be laid by advocates of this hypothesis.

Sonnet 96 emphasises the conclusion drawn from 36 that the friend was a well-known personage. He is some one whom "more and less" (i.e. high and low) discuss. The twelfth line, "If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy *state*," recalls 37: "And by a part of all thy *glory* live." But the word is vague, and the context determines its interpretation rather in the sense of personal beauty and graciousness than of social position.

Sonnet 124 asserts that Shakespeare's affection is independent of any changes of fortune. Taking Mr. Butler's own paraphrase of the first quatrain, "If my love for you depended only on outward circumstances, it might prove to be no lawfully begotten offspring, but a mere base-born child subject to the vicissitudes of fortune," it is obvious to point out that the friend must have been some one whose

friendship the poet might be charged with cultivating for the sake of the good fortune it might bring. It would not have been worth while to say that his love did not suffer "in smiling pomp," if pomp had no relation with his friend. There are indications in not a few other sonnets that the social interval between the poet and his friend was considerable. Sonnet 72 imagines the world remonstrating with the friend for his misplaced affection. Sonnets 69, 95, 96 describe the way in which the world is apt to discuss a young gentleman who lives much in the public eye, while Sonnets 80 and 87, which speak of the friend's worth, give the impression that he has worth in the world's estimation as well as in the poet's.

On the whole, then, we may safely conclude from the general tone of the sonnets that Shakespeare's friend was a person known in society, of good birth and fortune,—and perhaps something of the pathos of the friendship lies in this fact,—but they contain no proof that he belonged to the nobility. An Elizabethan noble was a much greater man than a person of the same rank to-day. It will be remembered that Queen Elizabeth considered the Earl of Oxford a very much superior person to Sir Philip Sidney, but a young gentleman in Sidney's position would sufficiently fill out the requirements of the friend in the sonnets. It must be borne in mind that the same passionate and reverent love which has led the poet in several places to depreciate his own position in the world would have operated to glorify all that belonged to his friend; and further that poetry is not prose.

Lean penury within that pen doth dwell
That to his subject lends not some small glory.

At the same time it must be allowed that there is nothing in the sonnets to preclude the supposition that the friend was a nobleman, if on other grounds that view should commend itself.

V. THE FRIEND: THE EARL OF SOUTHAMPTON

The question, Which of the young gentlemen of the day had the honour of being Shakespeare's admired friend? is one that divides the greater number of theorists into two hostile factions, — the advocates of Southampton and of Pembroke; and as I have already said that I believe the sonnets to have been written from 1597 onwards, I have implicitly given a vote against Southampton's claim; for that nobleman was born as early as 1573, and in 1597 was engaged with Essex in an expedition to the Azores. The Southampton theory has received a new lease of life from Mr. Lee's recent advocacy; but I am bold enough to think that, even on Mr. Lee's own data, Southampton's claim can be disposed of. Mr. Lee, although he dates most of the sonnets in 1593-1594, assigns Sonnet 107 to the year 1603¹; it follows that the date of the Envoy (126), a poem obviously, from its exceptional form, written to conclude the series,² must be at least not earlier than 1603, in which year Southampton was thirty years old. Now is it credible that any one, even if he were the greatest peer of the realm and the most bountiful of patrons, should have been addressed by Shakespeare as a "lovely boy" when thirty years of age; especially considering the fact that in the sixteenth century life began earlier than now, and ended earlier? Mr. Lee

¹ For the argument see the notes to this sonnet, and Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 148.

² It has been conjectured (Gollancz, *Temple Shakespeare*, p. xx) that this Envoy was written to conclude the first century of sonnets; the ground of the conjecture being that Sonnet 100 begins a new series written after an interval. If it were quite certain that all the first ninety-nine sonnets were in their true order, the argument might be worth considering; but there are several (e.g. 77) that do not seem to justify their position. But apart from this, 126 would not come well after 99. It belongs to the second period, when passion has died down; like the sonnets from 100 onwards it is calm and contemplative and a little sad. Especially it chimes in sentiment with 104. The construction of the couplets resembles that of the rhymed passage in *Othello* II, i, 149-161, the date of which is 1604.

surmounts this difficulty by a theory that the Envoy is addressed not to Southampton but to Cupid; but this is impossible. Cupid is immortal or he is nothing; and the point of the Envoy is that mortal beauty must fade at last. Nature may hold back some favourite for a while from the clutches of Time, to whom all things are due, but she must at last come to the audit, and cannot secure her acquittance without surrendering her favourite:

If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack,
As thou goest onward, still will pluck thee back,
She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
May Time disgrace, and envious minutes kill.
Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure!
She may detain, but not still [always] keep, her treasure:
Her audit, though delayed, answered must be,
And her quietus is to render thee.

Mr. Lee has advanced one new argument for the Southampton theory which, if it could be maintained, would place it for ever beyond cavil. Southampton was released from prison on James's accession in 1603, and "it is impossible," says Mr. Lee, "to resist the inference that Shakespeare [in Sonnet 107] saluted his patron on the close of his days of tribulation." The inference seems to me far from irresistible. Indeed, if this sonnet were really an ode of congratulation under such circumstances, Southampton in turn could hardly have congratulated the poet on the fervour of his feelings. For there is no reference in the sonnet to any release from prison, and its crowning thought is the familiar one, that the friend will survive in Shakespeare's verse, not that he has obtained a new and unexpected resurrection to life. Mr. Lee suggests a paraphrase of the opening quatrain which it will not bear:

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a confined doom.

The words "my true love" might certainly by themselves be taken, as Mr. Lee takes them, to mean "my true *friend*," but "the lease of my true love" can only mean "the lease of my true *affection* for my friend." All leases are for a term of years; each has a limit or "confine" assigned to it, on which day of doom it expires. Shakespeare says that neither his own fears nor the world's prophecies of disastrous changes have justified themselves, for in the year of grace 1603 he finds his affection fresher than ever. But to the friends of Southampton the death of Elizabeth would have been an occasion not of foreboding but of hope.

Perhaps the most emphatic argument against the identification of Shakespeare's friend with the Earl of Southampton is the non-natural interpretation of certain words and phrases to which it compels its adherents. The publisher, Thomas Thorpe, inscribed his book to "the onlie *begetter* of these insuing sonnets, Mr. W. H.," — a phrase which ninety-nine persons out of every hundred, even of those familiar with Elizabethan literature,¹ would unhesitatingly understand to mean their inspirer, and in view of such sonnets as 38, 76, and 105, and of the metaphors employed in 78 and 86, would regard as especially well chosen. But Southampton's initials were H. W. Either, therefore, it must be assumed that the publisher inverted their order as a blind, or else some new sense must be found for "begetter." Boswell, the

¹ Samuel Daniel, as Minto points out, uses the word "beget," in the dedication of his *Delia* sonnets to the Countess of Pembroke, in its natural sense; although he applies it not to *Delia* but to his patroness:

Wonder of these, glory of other times,
O thou, whom Envy ev'n is forc'd to admire:
Great Patroness of these my humble rimes,
Which thou from out thy greatness dost *inspire*;
Sith only thou hast deigned to raise them higher,
Vouchsafe now to accept them as thine own,
Begotten by thy hand and my desire,
Wherein my zeal and thy great might is shown.

editor of the Variorum Shakespeare, who wished to relieve the poet from the imputation of having written the sonnets to any particular person, or as anything but a play of fancy suggested for the word the sense of "getter" (which had not occurred to either Steevens or Malone), meaning by that the person who procured the manuscript, and this interpretation has been adopted by Mr. Lee. Such a use of the word is acknowledged to be extremely rare, and the cases alleged are dubious, but it is not impossible. However, against understanding such a sense here there are several strong reasons. In the first place, "only-begotten" is so familiar an English phrase that "only" could hardly be used with "beget" if the verb had an unusual sense. But supposing it could, what force would "only" retain if "begetter" meant "procurer"? Allowing it to be conceivable that a piratical publisher should inscribe a book of sonnets to the thief who brought him the manuscript, why should he lay stress on the fact that "alone he did it"? Was it an enterprise of such great peril? Mr. Lee attempts to meet this and similar difficulties by depreciating Thorpe's skill in the use of language; but the examples he quotes in his interesting Appendix do not support his theory. Thorpe's words are accurately used, even to nicety, and, indeed, Mr. Lee himself owns that in another matter Thorpe showed a "literary sense" and "a good deal of dry humour." I venture to affirm that this dedication also shows a well-developed literary sense. In the next place, this theory of the "procurer" obliges us to believe that Thorpe wished Mr. W. H. that eternity which the poet had promised not to him, nor to men in general, but to some undesigned third party. Mr. Lee calls the words *promised by our ever-living poet* "a decorative and supererogatory phrase." That is a very mild qualification of them under the circumstances. But an examination of Thorpe's other dedications shows that his style was rather

sententious than "supererogatory." Then, again, on this theory the epithet "well-wishing" also becomes "supererogatory." For what it implies is that the adventurous publisher's motive in giving the sonnets to the world without their author's consent was a good one. The person to whom they were written might reasonably expect, though he would not necessarily credit, an assurance on this head; but what would one literary jackal care for another's good intentions? There are other points that might be urged, but these are sufficient. Only, I would add that the whole tone of the dedication, which is respectful, and the unusual absence of a qualifying phrase, such as "his esteemed friend," before the initials, are against the theory that Mr. W. H. was on the same social level as the publisher.

There is one other point of interpretation upon which the Southampton faction are compelled by their theory to go against probabilities. There are two places in which a play is made upon the name Will, the paronomasia being indicated in the *editio princeps* by italic type, in which that edition, as Mr. Wyndham has shown at length,¹ is very far from being lavish. In one of these places (143), if the pun be allowed at all, it cannot refer to the poet's own name, but must refer to the name of his friend. In this sonnet the "dark lady," pursuing the poet's friend while the poet pursues her, is compared to a housewife chasing a chicken and followed by her own crying child. It concludes:

So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
Whilst I thy babe chase thee afar behind;
But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:
So will I pray that thou mayst have thy *Will*,
If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.

¹ *The Poems of Shakespeare*, edited with an introduction and notes by George Wyndham (Methuen & Co.), page 259.

The word "Will" is printed here in the original text in italics, and the pun is in Shakespeare's manner. Sonnet 135 opens :

Whoever nath her wish, thou hast thy will,
And *Will* to boot, and *Will* in overplus ;
More than enough am I that vex thee still,
To thy sweet will making addition thus.

The third Will here must be Shakespeare, because "*Will* in overplus" corresponds to "more than enough am I"; and few critics with the 143d sonnet also in mind would hesitate to refer the second Will to Shakespeare's friend, for whom the "dark lady" had been laying snares. But the Southamptonites, who cannot allow that the friend's name was Will, are constrained to deny that there is any pun at all in 143, and to refer that in 135 to the distinction between "will" in its ordinary sense and "will" in the sense of "desire." But the balance of the line makes it almost necessary that, as "Will in overplus" must be a proper name, "Will to boot" should be a proper name also. And that there are more Wills than one concerned in the matter is made more evident still by other passages, where the poet jocosely limits his claim on the lady's favour to the fact that his Christian name is Will, acknowledging that not a few other people have as good a claim as he :

Shall will in others seem right gracious,
And in my will no fair acceptance shine?
and again,
Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill;
Think all but one, and me in that one Will.

VI. THE FRIEND: THE EARL OF PEMBROKE

The theory that the friend addressed in the sonnets was William Herbert, afterwards third Earl of Pembroke, arose inevitably from the letters W. H. of the dedication, as soon as the sonnets themselves began to be studied; and although it cannot be said to have established itself, there are not a few arguments that may be urged in its favour. Herbert was born in 1580, so that he was sixteen years younger than Shakespeare, and not too old about 1598 to be credited with tears (34. 13)¹; and he seems to have been of an intellectual temper, likely both to attract and be attracted by the poet. He wrote verses himself, and was inclined, we are told, to melancholy. Gardiner calls him the Hamlet of James's court, and there may be more in the phrase than he intended. At any rate the date of *Hamlet* is 1602. Pembroke's personal handsomeness is dwelt upon in a sonnet by Francis Davison, the son of Secretary Davison, who, being a gentleman, was less likely than a literary hack to say the thing that was not. In inscribing to him the *Poetical Rhapsody* in 1602 he prefixed a sonnet which opens thus:

Great earl, whose high and noble mind is higher
And nobler than thy noble high desire;
Whose outward shape, *though it most lovely be*,
Doth in fair robes a fairer soul attire. . .

Considering that the occasion did not call for any reference to the Earl's personal appearance, Davison's statement must be received with attention. Mr. Lee denies that there is any evidence for Pembroke's beauty, and calls this sentence of Davison's "a cautiously qualified reference"; while, on the other hand, he holds that the Virgilian tag, "quo non

¹ So Languet speaks to Sidney of the "tears which hardly suffered you to say farewell." Sidney was eighteen at the time.

formosior alter Affuit," which an Oxford wit applied to Southampton, is a satisfactory proof that he came up to Shakespeare's ideal. Surely one passage is as good evidence as the other; and perhaps the fact that both young noblemen were admitted to Elizabeth's favour is better evidence than either. It is interesting that we should have a testimony to Pembroke's "loveliness" as late as 1602, when he was two-and-twenty, for the use of that epithet — not, surely, a "cautiously qualified" but a very strong one considering his age — is some argument that he is the person to whom the same epithet is applied in the Envoy (126), and who is there stated to have retained his youthful looks beyond the usual term. Enthusiasts for the Pembroke theory, like Mr. Tyler and the Rev. W. A. Harrison, have collected from the Sydney Papers all the references they contain to the young lord, and one or two of these lend a certain additional plausibility to the theory. It is discovered, for example, that in 1597 negotiations were on foot to marry Herbert to a daughter of the Earl of Oxford, which came to nothing; and the suggestion has been made that Shakespeare was prompted to help in overcoming the youth's reluctance. It cannot be denied that the opening set of sonnets, which are written in praise of marriage, demand some such background of historical fact; though the situation is one that might have presented itself in any of a dozen great houses. Such a theory requires us to assume that Shakespeare was familiar at Wilton, and knew Herbert at home before the youth came up to London in the following spring.¹ I do not think this so improbable as it appears to Mr. Lee, for Shakespeare had become famous three years earlier, and Lady Pembroke ("Sidney's sister")

¹ "My Lord Harbart hath with much adoe brought his Father to consent that he may live at London, yet not before the next Springe." (Quoted by Tyler, *Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 44.)

was renowned for her patronage of poets; moreover, Samuel Daniel, who speaks of Wilton as "that arbour of the Muses," was himself there at this period as tutor to the young lord, so that Shakespeare's fame is not likely to have been unsounded. As to the probability, we may ask, If Ben Jonson was welcomed at Penshurst, why should not Shakespeare have been received at Wilton? If this were allowed, it might be urged that a friendship begun at Wilton in the boy's impressionable youth was in a natural way continued in London. Of course all this is mere conjecture; but in the extreme paucity of the records I do not think that an argument from silence is conclusive against it. A friendship is an intangible thing, and would make no stir so as to be talked about. It would be absurd to have to conclude that neither Shakespeare nor Pembroke had any friends in London because we cannot give their names. At the same time it must not be ignored that one weak place in the Pembroke theory is the fact that some of the sonnets were almost certainly written before 1598, and that the young gentleman did not come to London till that year.

A still weaker place in the theory is the misdescription, that it implies, of Lord Pembroke as *Mr.* W. H. It has often been alleged that a parallel case is that of the poet Lord Buckhurst, who is described on title-pages as *Mr.* Sackville; but Mr. Lee has disposed of the parallel by showing that while Lord Buckhurst was a commoner when he wrote his poems, Lord Pembroke had by courtesy always been a peer, and was known to contemporaries in his minority as Lord Herbert. It is perhaps going too far to say that this difficulty renders the Pembroke hypothesis altogether untenable; for there remain two alternative possibilities. It is possible that Thorpe found his manuscript of the Sonnets headed "To W. H.," and, being ignorant who W. H. was, supplied the ordinary title of respect. This

would be a perfectly fair argument; though I should say that it does not answer to the impression that the terms of the dedication leave on one's mind. The alternative theory to that of Thorpe's ignorance would be that he suppressed the title by way of disguise. This also is a fairly legitimate supposition under the circumstances. Mr. Lee argues that for a publisher to have addressed any peer as plain "Mister" would have been defamation and a Star Chamber matter, as it well might if the publisher intended an insult. But in any case the peer would have to set the Star Chamber in motion; and there might be good reasons for not doing so. If Thorpe had obtained permission to dedicate the Sonnets to Pembroke on condition that his *incognito* was respected, — a somewhat difficult supposition, — then it is hard to say that "Mr. W. H." was an impossible way of referring to him; because, though by courtesy a peer, Herbert was legally a commoner until he succeeded to the earldom in 1601. Those who on the ground of this derogation from Herbert's dignity have denied the possibility of his being the "begetter" of the sonnets have perhaps not always sufficiently considered the impossibility of dedicating them "To the Right Honourable William, Earle of Pembroke, Lord Chamberlaine to His Majestie, one of his most honourable Privie Counsell, and Knight of the most noble order of the Garter." Had Thorpe ventured upon such a dedication as that, I can conceive the Star Chamber taking action of its own accord. Still, when special pleading has done its utmost, I am bound to confess that I am not convinced. There is a smug tone about the dedication which suggests that while Mr. W. H. was far above Thorpe's own social position, he was yet something less than so magnificent a personage as the Earl of Pembroke.

But not content with identifying the poet's friend, the Pembroke party are determined to find a counterpart in real

life to the "dark lady" who figures so ominously in the later sonnets. The number of brunettes in the capital at any time is legion, and the sonnets supply no possible clue by which the particular person can be identified. The attempt, therefore, to fix upon some one with whom Pembroke is known to have had relations is merely gratuitous; and it rejoices the heart of any sane spectator to learn that this supposed "dark lady," Mistress Mary Fitton, turns out, when her portraits are examined, to have been conspicuously fair.¹

VII. THE FRIEND: MR. WILLIAM HUGHES, ETC.

Tyrwhitt was the first critic who suggested that Mr. W. H. might be Mr. William Hughes. He based his conjecture on the seventh line of Sonnet 20, which in the original edition is printed as follows:

A man in hew all *Hews* in his controwling.

As the word stands on the page in the Quarto it certainly looks momentous; for there is no other word in italics between the 5th sonnet and the 53d. But it must be noted that what chiefly impresses the modern reader is the capital letter with the italics; and this is found with *every* word printed in italics throughout the sonnets, so that a capital letter to a reader of the Quarto would not be in the least suggestive of a proper name as it is to us. Moreover, the line contains no pun, such as we have upon the name "Will" in Sonnet 135, etc. Mr. Wyndham, although he does not advocate the Hughes theory, considers that the italic type is not accidental. "Of *Hews*," he says, "it is enough to say here, that if its capital and italics be a freak

¹ *Gossip from a Muniment Room*, by Lady Newdigate-Newdegate, p. 25. See also Lee, *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 415.

of the printer, they constitute the only freak of that kind in the whole edition of 1609." But there is another in Sonnet 104, where "autumn" is in italic type, and both "spring" and "winter" in roman.

The Hughes theory, however, has this advantage over some others, — that if it cannot be proved, neither can it be disproved. It is not to the point to say with Mr. Lee (p. 93, n.) that "no known contemporary of the name, either in age or position in life, bears any resemblance to the young man who is addressed by Shakespeare in his sonnets." For why should Mr. W. H. have been a "known" contemporary? People are not even now chronicled in dictionaries of biography simply for their good looks. We cannot deny that there may have been a young gentleman of family and fortune called William Hughes, with a taste for the theatre and the flattery of men of genius, whose handsome face and gentle manners won the poet's affection. A modern variety of the Hughes theory which makes him a boy actor is put out of court by the 37th sonnet, and still more by those which disparage the player's calling.

Of other suggestions that have been made, it is unnecessary to do more than record one or two. Mr. W. C. Hazlitt (*Shakespear*, 1902) discovered a Mr. William Hammond to whom Middleton dedicated one of his plays, but nothing more is known of him. Mrs. C. C. Stopes divides her conjecture between William Hunnis, a gentleman of Queen Elizabeth's chapel royal, who died in 1597, and some other William Herbert, not the Earl of Pembroke. Mr. Fleay suggests William Hervey, the stepfather of Lord Southampton (*Chronicle of the English Drama*, II, 212). *Trahit sua quemque voluptas*.

VIII. THE RIVAL POET

The concluding couplet of Sonnet 83 says :

There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
Than *both* your poets can in praise devise.

Of these poets Shakespeare is one ; who is the other ? Certain characteristics of this rival are plainly marked in the sonnets. He is "learned" compared with Shakespeare (78. 7), which means probably that he had been bred at a university ; he has "grace" (78. 8) ; and his writing is "polished" (85. 8) ; one sonnet speaks of his "precious phrase by all the Muses filed" (85. 4), another, somewhat inconsistently, of "the proud full sail of his great verse" (86. 1). The first impulse of a reader is to say that the poet must be Marlowe ; but Marlowe was killed in May, 1593. The first quatrain of Sonnet 78 implies that the sonnets in this section were far from being the first written ; and the section immediately preceding has close affinities with *Hamlet* ; so that on the score of date alone we can reject Marlowe's candidature. Moreover, it seems to be implied (though this is doubtful) by the words "Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days" in Sonnet 82. 8 that the rival poet is a younger man than Shakespeare. There is another characteristic indicated in Sonnet 80 which ought to help in determining him. He is said to have dealings with familiar spirits. Professor Minto was of opinion that this reference decided the question in favour of George Chapman, who as a scholar and a translator of Homer's *Iliad* into swelling Alexandrines was otherwise a suitable candidate. He quotes the following passage from the Dedication to *The Shadow of Night*, a poem published in 1594.

Now what a supererogation in wit this is, to think Skill so mightily pierced with their loves that she should show them her secrets, when she will scarcely be looked upon by others *but with invocation, fasting, watching, yea, not without having drops of their souls, like a heavenly familiar.*

Professor Dowden appears to be convinced by this passage. "Chapman," he says, "was preëminently the poet of Night." And he calls attention to the fact that in the *Tears of Peace* (1609) he represents himself as being visited and inspired by Homer. It is possible to suppose that Chapman had made some boast of his midnight inspirations in a form closer to the phrasing of the 82d sonnet and nearer to the time at which the Sonnets were written, perhaps in some sonnet which Shakespeare had seen. Those who hold Chapman to be the rival poet may like to note that in 1598 he wrote a poem to that celebrated Doctor Harriot¹ of whom Marlowe had said in his "atheistical" way that he could juggle better than Moses. It is also noteworthy that although Chapman was an older man than Shakespeare and might on this score seem disqualified for the post of rival, his novel undertaking of a rhymed version of Homer, the first instalment of which appeared in 1598, might satisfy the reference in Sonnet 82. 8, especially in its connection with the mention of "knowledge" in the fifth line. But was Chapman the sort of man to write affectionate sonnets to a youth? The sonnets which he did write, "a coronet for his Mistress Philosophy," may well raise a doubt.

James Boaden, the dramatist, who in some papers contributed to the *Gentleman's Magazine* in 1832 first put forward the theory that "Mr. W. H." was William Herbert, argued also that the rival poet must be Samuel Daniel. His arguments are (1) that Daniel was a *protégé* of the Pembroke family, (2) that they were patrons of Dr. Dee the astrologer, (3) and that Daniel dedicated to William Herbert his *Defence of Ryme*. Against which arguments it is easy to urge (1) that as Daniel had been tutor to William Herbert, Shakespeare could have no ground for resenting their relations;

¹ "To my admired and soul-loved friend, master of all essential and true knowledge, M. Harriots"; a poem in couplets, appended to *Achilles' Shield*.

(2) that there is no evidence of Daniel's having had dealings with familiar spirits; and (3) that the dedication to the *Defence of Ryme* is in prose and contains no passage that could be censured as "gross painting" (82. 13). It may be conceded, however, that these negative arguments lose their force if Mr. W. H. was some one other than William Herbert. Certainly the description in 85 of the "precious phrase by all the Muses filed" applies as well to Daniel as the "proud full sail of his great verse" does to Chapman; and Daniel's *Musophilus* (1599) is written in praise of learning. The published dedications of *Musophilus* are to several ladies and to the Earl of Southampton congratulating him on his release from prison; but it was Daniel's habit to send a special dedication with each volume presented, and one may have been sent to Mr. W. H.

The most recent suggestion for the post of Shakespeare's rival is that of Barnabe Barnes, author of a book of sonnets and madrigals called *Parthenophil and Parthenophe*. Barnes's sponsor is Mr. Sidney Lee. His main arguments are that Barnes wrote a sonnet to Lord Southampton in which he mentions his eyes and his "virtues" (cf. Sonnets 78. 5 and 79. 9), and that he twice applies the term "hymn" to his love poems¹ (cf. Sonnet 85, in which Shakespeare declares that he cries "'Amen' to every *hymn* that able spirit affords"). Barnes is certainly far more likely than Chapman to have written sonnets to Shakespeare's friend. He has a free flow of fancy in an amorous vein. But it is almost incredible that Shakespeare should have praised his verse so highly, and dates are not favourable to the theory. Barnes's *Parthenophil* was entered on the Stationers' Register only a month after Shakespeare's *Venus and Adonis*. Mr. Lee disposes of the mysterious 86th sonnet by explaining it to

¹ But Mr. Lee admits that both Drayton and Chapman wrote "hymns," and Chapman's "hymns" are the two sections of *The Shadow of Night*.

mean that Shakespeare "detected a *touch of magic* in the man's writing."

Mr. Wyndham, who writes on this question with great caution, thinks that the rival poet must have been either Jonson, Chapman, Marston, or Drayton, who "constituted a society for mutual admiration, whose members applauded each other's efforts, while they ignored, burlesqued, or patronised Shakespeare's." The whole business of the "*Poetomachia*," as Mr. Wyndham calls it, is far from being as clear as he conceives, but it hardly enters into this question. Direct evidence for Drayton's rivalry there is none, and in his case, as in that of Barnes, the dates are awkward. Drayton's first book of sonnets appeared in 1594, and this would seem to disqualify him for the position of a "fresh" poet at the end of the century, when, as I have shown above, Shakespeare was writing his sonnets. Mr. Wyndham hints that some of Drayton's sonnets were addressed to a youth; one (x of ed. 1619) he declares "obviously." But surely it is not so. In the sonnet referred to, Idea is compared to a miser's spendthrift heir, who lavishes favours in all directions.

To nothing fitter can I thee compare
Than to the son of some rich penny-father,
Who having now brought on his end with care
Leaves to his son all he had heaped together.

Drayton compares his lady to a spendthrift *heir* because a spendthrift *heiress* is unknown.

It must be admitted, then, that the identity of the rival poet has not yet been satisfactorily determined. There are no Elizabethan sonnets extant besides Shakespeare's addressed to a youth and praising his perfections, except those published in the *Cynthia* of Richard Barnfield (1595), and they are merely exercises on the same theme as that writer's *Affectionate Shepherd*, which he himself declared to

be an imitation of Virgil's *Second Eclogue*. If the choice lay among the four poets mentioned by Mr. Wyndham, a claim might be put in for Ben Jonson, who was becoming known about 1597, and in that or the next year took the town by storm with *Every Man in His Humour*. But there is no evidence that he dabbled in necromancy.

IX. THE FORM AND STYLE OF THE SONNETS

1. The form of quatorzain invariably used by Shakespeare for his sonnets was not the strict Petrarchan form, but one in three quatrains and a couplet; devised, it is believed, by the Earl of Surrey, who wrote in it at least one memorable sonnet, "The soote season which bud and bloom forth brings." Surrey's example seems to have had weight with the Elizabethan critics, for as early as 1575, i.e. before any of Daniel's sonnets had appeared, we find George Gascoigne defining the sonnet as "a poem of fourteen lines, every line containing ten syllables, the first twelve rhyming in staves of four lines by cross metre, and the last two rhyming together." The publication, however, of Sidney's *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) drew attention once more to the Italian form with its marked division into octave and sestet, and both Daniel and Barnes, whose sonnets immediately followed (1592-1593), used this form occasionally, while Constable used it always. It is therefore significant that Shakespeare should have preferred the form devised by Surrey. I cannot do better than quote here some remarks made on this point by Mr. Bowyer Nichols¹ in refutation of the idea put forward by Mark Pattison that Shakespeare blundered into this form "without any suspicion that there existed a better type."

¹ *A Little Book of Sonnets*, Introduction, p. xviii (Methuen & Co.).

Whether Shakespeare could read Italian and French may still be disputed, though it is tolerably certain that he had a working acquaintance with them both. He may or may not have read Petrarch and Desportes; certainly he did not borrow wholesale in the fashion of contemporaries. He must at any rate have been perfectly familiar with the Italian type of the sonnet in the work of his fellow-countrymen. Daniel, from whom Shakespeare is alleged to have borrowed, sometimes uses it, and Wyatt, Surrey, Sidney, and Constable do so too. It is impossible to suppose that Shakespeare was not alive to its merits, its more organic and symmetrical effect, its greater concision, unity, and finish. It could not have been ignorance or accident (as it might have been with lesser men like Barnes or Griffin) which prevented the greatest of English sonneteers from using what he must have recognised to be the ideally more perfect form. The only explanation seems to be that he considered the form evolved by Surrey and other English poets to have on the whole for English practice the advantage. He judged, as we may believe, that the classic symmetry of the Petrarchan sonnet was in English too difficult of attainment, that it cramped invention, and imposed too many sacrifices and concessions; and that the artistic end could better be achieved in the inferior medium.¹ And indeed, as a matter of fact, he gets nearer to the Petrarchan quality than any other sonneteer in the dignity, sweetness, variety, and freedom of his effects. . . . The fact is, that an English sonnet on the Petrarchan model approaches almost too closely to the poetry of pure ingenuity, to which the sonnet properly speaking does not belong, and whose appearances it should sedulously avoid. . . .

One word may be said as to the final couplet. There is no doubt that, to an ear attuned to the Italian scheme, this is a disturbing element. It has an over-emphatic and epigrammatic effect. It has also this effect, at any rate in most Elizabethan writing, that the most marked rhythmical break comes at the end of the three quatrains, at the twelfth instead of, as in the Italian, at the eighth line. Nevertheless the couplet has great expressive character, and it sums up the situation or feeling in a way that no other form could do:—

Now if thou wouldst, when all have given him over
From death to life thou mightst him yet recover.

and

If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ nor no man ever loved.

¹ Mr. Nichols notes that the choice and practice of Shakespeare are confirmed by Keats, whose earlier sonnets were Italian in form, but the later Shakespearean.

Keats, following certain elder examples, when he uses the Elizabethan form, runs on the sense from the third stanza into the couplet; but it would seem really most in consonance with the genius of the form frankly to make the pause at the twelfth line, and this Shakespeare, I think, always does.¹

I have made this long extract, which might with advantage have been still longer, from Mr. Nichols's book because it is, so far as I know, the first attempt to justify on artistic grounds Shakespeare's preference for the form of quatorzain which has rightly come to bear his name; though Mr. Wyndham, in his edition of the Sonnets (p. cvii), is careful to give Shakespeare credit for deliberate choice in the matter.

2. The reader who passes from the *Venus and Adonis* or *Lucrece* to the Sonnets undoubtedly perceives a difference in point of style, but it is not so easy to describe as the corresponding change that came over Shakespeare's method of writing blank verse, which can, to a certain extent, be formulated, especially in regard to the position of the pause. In the sonnets, as in the poems, the pause comes regularly at the end of the line, and a central pause is rare, though it is occasionally found; for instance in 63. 4, 104. 3, 116. 2. The difference between the poems and the sonnets is largely a difference of substance; the latter impress us as the work of a maturer mind. The poems, with all their beauty, are somewhat thin; the matter seems stretched out to fit the form; while in the sonnets the mould of form is exactly filled; thought has deepened; passion has taken the place of rhetoric, and limpidity is exchanged for richness. If we would find a parallel in the plays to the balance of style and substance, thought and imagination that is so striking in the greater number of the sonnets, we must turn not to the rhymed scenes of the early plays but to the more lyrical passages of the blank verse in the poet's middle

¹ The one exception seems to be Sonnet 35.

period; to such lines, for instance, as these from *The Merchant of Venice* :

A day in April never came so sweet,
To show how costly summer was at hand,
As this fore-spurrer comes before his lord (II, ix, 93-95);

or these, from the same play :

There 's not the smallest orb which thou behold'st
But in his motion like an angel sings,
Still quiring to the young-eyed cherubins (V, 60-62).

It will be noted, however, that there are certain differences in style among the sonnets themselves. A few appear to be earlier than the rest, such as 24, 46, and 47; but it may be merely that their mode is earlier. It is more certain that a few are later than the majority. Just as in the plays we see the perfect balance between the lyrical and intellectual impulses begin to be upset in *Hamlet*, while in such plays as *Coriolanus* and *Troilus and Cressida* the intellectual impulse has triumphed, so among the sonnets we seem able to distinguish some, such as the group 71-74, which correspond to the *Hamlet* period, and others, such as 123 and 124, which suggest affinities with *Troilus and Cressida*. There are still passages in *Hamlet* where the lyrical power is strong, such as the speech of Laertes :

For Hamlet and the trifling of his favour,
Hold it a fashion and a toy in blood,
A violet in the youth of primy nature,
Forward, not permanent, sweet, not lasting,
The perfume and suppliance of a minute;

but we can feel the difference between even this and the passages quoted above; and the more typical passages of the play are the soliloquies, in which the intellectual interest is paramount. In the great third scene of the first act of *Troilus and Cressida*, however, we have another sort of

writing altogether; the lines are full of abstract words of Latin derivation, and the thing to be expressed almost diverts attention from the expression. Take for example such a passage as the following:

O, when degree is shaken,
Which is the ladder to all high designs,
Then enterprise is sick! How could communities,
Degrees in schools, and brotherhoods in cities,
Peaceful commerce from dividable shores,
The primogenitive and due of birth,
Prerogative of age, crowns, sceptres, laurels,
But by degree, stand in authentic place?
Take but degree away, untune that string,
And hark what discord follows! Each thing meets
In mere oppugnancy.

Allowing for the difference in subject and also for the difference between a dramatic speech and a lyrical poem, we can easily find parallels to this abstract way of writing among the later sonnets. Thus in 117:

Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof surmise accumulate;
in 118: Thus policy in love, to anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured;
in 124: No, it was builded far from accident;
It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
Under the blow of thrall'd discontent
Whereto th' inviting time our fashion calls.
It fears not policy, that heretic, etc.

3. Within the general mould, already described, of three quatrains and a final couplet there are certain differences which may be noted in the mode of the sonnet's construction. The more usual method is to develop the subject in three stages, putting the conclusion into the final couplet.

Thus in Sonnet 67 three questions are asked in the three quatrains and the answer given in the couplet. In 83 the poet's apology for silence is presented as an argument in three clauses, the salient fact being put in the couplet as strongly as possible. In 97 the second quatrain puts in an objection to the first, which is met by the third, the couplet in this case being treated as an extension of the third quatrain (as in 35). In some few cases, such as 48, the second and third quatrains reply to the first. Occasionally this triple management of the theme is more distinctly marked by the repetition of the same or similar words at the beginning of each quatrain, as in Sonnets 49, 64, 100. Sometimes the sonnet falls not into three parts but into two, the break coming, after the Italian manner, at the end of the eighth line. Examples are 41 and 44, in both of which, as is natural under the circumstances, the couplet becomes part of the sestet, though it is left as detached as possible; but in only one case (63) do the first two quatrains run together without a pause. Sonnets 66 and 129 are unlike the rest in not being written in quatrains, though the rhymes are so arranged.

Variety is obtained not only by differences in the management of the quatrains but also by variations in rhythm. In 60 it is obvious to note the contrast between the smoothness of the first quatrain, describing the work of Time, in which each line runs to its end like the ripple to which it compares the succession of minutes, and the second quatrain, which by its slowness and repeated breaks suggests the labour of human life which Time hinders at every step. We remark also that in sad or contemplative sonnets the effect is helped by the studied monotony of the rhythm. In 73 most of the lines move to their close without pause,¹ while the opening

¹ Perhaps it should be pointed out that a succession of regular pauses, as in 65. 1, 73. 2, is sometimes only a stronger way of having no pause at all.

lines of each quatrain, which are always of the highest importance in the Shakespearean form of sonnet, are echoes of each other. Of the contemplative sonnet, written without pause within the line, good examples are 12 and 18. In 64 and 65, while the subject of Time's ravages is impersonal, the pauses come only at the end of the lines; but when the thought of the friend is introduced, passion shows itself by a violent break in line 13 of 64 and line 9 of 65. Similarly in 61 the half-amused, half-despondent answer to the sad questions in the first two quatrains is given in a line of almost choking rhythm, "O no | thy love | though much | is not so great." Further, the student will not fail to remark the variety of rhythm in the opening lines and again the contrast in rhythm between lines 1 and 2, and that also between lines 1, 5, and 9. The greater number of opening lines have a pause only at the end. When there is a pause within the line it is most frequent after the second or third foot; but examples are found of pause after the second syllable, the third, the fifth, and even the seventh. But a comparison of two sonnets such as 53 and 74, which open with a pause in the same place, will show how little the whole rhythmical effect can be accounted for by any single consideration.

4. Mr. Wyndham in the nineteenth section of his introduction calls attention to another element in the beauty of these sonnets. He says, "No other English poet lets the accent fall so justly in accord with the melody of his rhythm and the emphasis of his speech, or meets it with a greater variety of subtly affiliated sounds." In pursuance of the plan of this edition, to give every editor credit for his own work and not to do badly a second time what has once been done well, I quote by Mr. Wyndham's leave his rhythmical analysis of the first sonnet, which, perhaps on account of its place in the series, is composed with special elaboration.

- 1 From *fairest* *Creatures* we desire *increase*
- 2 That thereby beauty's *Rose* might never *Die*
- 3 But as the *Riper* should by *Time* *decease* ✓
- 4 His *tender heir* might *bear* his memory
- 5 But thou *contracted* to thine own *bright eyes*
- 6 *Feed'st* thy light's *flame* with self-substantial *fuel*
- 7 Making a *famine* where *abundance* *lies*
- 8 *Thyself* thy *foe* to thy sweet self *too* *cruel*
- 9 *Thou* that art *now* the world's fresh *ornament*
- 10 And *only* *herald* to the *gaudy* *spring*
- 11 *Within* thine own *bud* *buriest* thy *content*
- 12 And *tender* *churl* *mak'st* *waste* in *niggarding*
- 13 *Pity* the *world* or else this *glutton* *be*
- 14 To *eat* the world's due by the *grave* and *thee*.

Observe (1) the use of kindred sounds, of alliteration, or of assonance, or of both, to mark the principal stresses in any one line: e.g. line 1, *creatures* and *increase*, where both are used; line 3, *riper* and *time*; line 4, *heir* and *bear*; line 5, *contracted* and *bright*; line 9, *Thou* and *now*; and (2), and this is most characteristic, the juxtaposition of assonantal sounds where two syllables consecutive, but in separate words, are accented with a marked pause between them: e.g. line 5, *bright eyes*; line 8, *too cruel*; line 11, *bud buriest*; line 12, *mak'st waste*. . . . Observe (3) the binding together of the lines in each quatrain by passing on a kindred sound from the last, or most important, accent in one line to the first, or most important, in the next: e.g. from 2 to 3, from *die* to *riper* by assonance, from 3 to 4, from *time* to *tender* by alliteration; from 6 to 7, from *fuel* to *famine*; from 7 to 8, from *famine* . . . *lies* to *thyself* . . . *foe*; from 9 to 10, from *ornament* to [only] *herald*; from 11 to 12, from *content* to *tender*; from 13 to 14, from *be* to *eat*. . . .

As an instance of strong alliteration, Mr. Wyndham quotes 65. 7, 8:

When rocks impregnable are not so *stout*
Nor *gates* of *steel* so *strong* but *Time* decays.

There is a beautiful example in 5, where the sense is well suggested by the sound:

Then were not summer's distillation left,
A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass.

Occasionally the alliteration almost passes into punning, and then offends modern taste, as in

Lean penury within that pen doth dwell (84. 5).

Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminate (64. 11).

5. As to the more general merits of expression to be found in the sonnets, we may note a few examples in different kinds.

(a) *The adequate expression of simple thought.* The more the sonnets are studied, the more will the student be impressed by the exactness of their language; and this can best be remarked in places where the thought to be expressed is of the simplest, e.g.:

Like stones of worth they *thinly* placed are (52. 7).

O blame me not, if I no more can write !

Look in your glass, and there appears a face

That over-goes my blunt invention quite,

Dulling my lines and doing me disgrace (103. 5-8).

When in the chronicle of wasted time

I see descriptions of the fairest wights,

And beauty making beautiful old rime

In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights . . . (106. 1-4).

The only exceptions will be found on the few occasions when the poet allows himself in some rhetorical antithesis, which a little strains or obscures the facts, e.g.:

Made old offences of affections new (110. 4),

which is a far less happy use of the contrast than that in 30. 4:

And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste.

(b) *Passages in which emotion is directly expressed without metaphor.* It is natural that of the unornamented parts of the sonnets the most striking should be those where the poet finds direct and simple expression for some strong

emotion. Of such passages the sonnets are full, but a few may be pointed out for special notice:

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower? (65. 1-4).

For thee watch I whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near (61. 13, 14).

Now all is done, have what shall have no end (110. 9).

Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb? (101. 9).

Let me confess that we two must be twain
Although our undivided loves are one (36. 1, 2).

Sometimes a whole sonnet is composed in this simple and straightforward manner, as 71 and 106, which contrast with such sonnets as 34 and 77, 90 and 102, which are as celebrated for their imagery.

(c) *Passages in which the thought is illuminated by metaphors from nature, art, history, etc.*

The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross (34. 11, 12).

Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks
Within his bending sickle's compass come (116. 9, 10).

Ah yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
Steal from his figure and no pace perceived (104. 9, 10).

The summer's flower is to the summer sweet
Though to itself it only live and die (94. 9, 10).

Give not a windy night a rainy morrow (90. 7).

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end (60. 1, 2).

Now stand you on the top of happy hours (16. 5).

Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days (70. 9).

6. A word may be added upon the vocabulary of the sonnets. For the most part its most striking characteristic is its appropriateness. There are no mighty *tours de force* like the "multitudinous sea incarnadine." Yet it is throughout unmistakably Shakespearean. Its characteristic quality, apart from the peculiar sweetness of the versification, seems to lie chiefly in the "prodigality" (to use Gray's word) of the picturesque metaphors borrowed from every quarter, but always in key with the predominant feeling of the particular sonnet. Coleridge in the *Biographia Literaria* instanced, as a proof of Shakespeare's genius, the fine use of the word "flatter" in Sonnet 33, by which a human life is transferred to nature from the particular emotion of the poet:

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain tops with sovereign eye.

Such a metaphorical use of language lights up with a sudden flash the poet's idea; and so prodigal is Shakespeare of his imagery that flash often succeeds flash in the same sonnet with great rapidity. Such metaphorical words must not be treated as if they were carefully studied similes like that in the first quatrain of Sonnet 60, or in 73, else their charm will be gone. It does not do, for example, in reading the opening lines of Sonnet 30,

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
I summon up remembrance of things past,

to call up to memory whatever experience we may, in real life, have enjoyed of "sessions" and "summonses." A hint is enough; and meanwhile the poet has suggested to us other flying images in his "dateless night" and "long since cancell'd woe." Sometimes it may happen that the special picture before the poet's own eye is not, for some reason, exactly determinable; or we cannot be sure that it is, as in

the epithet "crooked," applied to eclipses, in Sonnet 60. Perhaps in that age the word "crooked" had become somewhat worn in use, like our own word "cross." Other and less important ways by which Shakespeare gains distinction for his vocabulary are by new coinages, such as "presagers" (23. 10) from *presage*, and "rondure" (21. 8) from *round*, and by the use of familiar words in slightly modified senses, e.g., *rehearse* (21. 4), *stretched* (17. 12).

X. THE TEXT OF THE QUARTO

Mr. Wyndham has endeavoured to meet the common assumption that the Quarto of 1609 was "a pirated edition published without Shakespeare's knowledge or against his wishes" by a defence which aims at proving that its use of italics, capitals, and punctuation gives evidence of design, and that the text has very few corruptions and only the most trifling misprints. I do not think that his argument can be held to succeed. To take, first, the case of the punctuation. In order to suggest the conclusion that the poet himself saw the sonnets through the press it is not sufficient to show, as Mr. Wyndham does, that occasionally the punctuation is admirable, because in such cases the printer may have followed the manuscript before him; it is necessary also to show that in no, or very few, cases is the punctuation unintelligent or absurd. Such cases, as a matter of fact, are not infrequent, and they are not all explicable on Mr. Wyndham's theory that the stop marks a rhythmical pause rather than a syntactical division. Thus:

Sonnet 16. 10 Which this (Times pensel or my pupill pen)

39. 7, 8 That by this seperation I may give:
That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone:

55. 7, 8 Nor Mars his sword, nor warres quick fire shall burne:
The living record of your memory.

Sonnet 99. 2-5 Sweet theefe whence didst thou steale thy sweet that
smels

If not from my loves breath, the purple pride,
Which on thy soft cheeke for complexion dwells?
In my loves veines thou hast too grosely died;

113. 13 Incapable of more repleat, with you,

117. 10 And on iust prooffe surmise, accumulate,

118. 9, 10 Thus pollicie in love t' anticipate
The ills that were, not grew to faults assured,

126. 7, 8 She keepes thee to this purpose, that her skill.
May time disgrace, and wretched mynuit kill.

Of "undoubted corruptions" Mr. Wyndham acknowledges three, viz. :

(1) Sonnet 146. 1, 2, where the last words of line 1 are repeated at the beginning of line 2.

(2) Sonnet 34. 10, 12, where the second *losse* is plainly a mistake for *croasse*.

(3) The "occasional confusion of *their* and *thy*."

"Occasional" is not the epithet I should have chosen for a confusion that occurs, if my reckoning be true, fifteen times¹ in a hundred and fifty sonnets; and of itself this fact is enough to convince one that the poet himself did not read the proof sheets, because, although in manuscript the contracted forms look much alike, the words do not look at all alike in print. Mr. Wyndham alters thirteen of these fifteen places, defending the Quarto reading only in 35. 8 and 37. 7.

Besides these three "undoubted corruptions" Mr. Wyndham allows three "suspicious features":

(1) Line 11 of Sonnet 25, ending *quite*, does not rhyme with line 9, ending *worth*.

(2) The couplet of Sonnet 96 is repeated from 36.

¹ The cases occur in Sonnets 26. 12; 27. 10; 35. 8 (twice); 37. 7; 43. 11; 45. 12; 46. 3, 8, 13, 14; 69. 5; 70. 6; 128. 11, 14. On the distribution of this blunder see Section XI, p. lxxv.

(3) Empty parentheses are placed after 126, which is not a sonnet, as if to indicate the compositor's expectation of a couplet.

For the rest he acknowledges "some half dozen of trifling misprints." It may be as well to collect some of these, so as to see if they are the sort of misprints that even the most careless author, and authors are undoubtedly careless correctors of the press, could have overlooked.

- Sonnet 12. 4 And sable curls *or* silver'd ore with white (for *all*)
- * 39. 12 Which time and thoughts so sweetly *doth* deceive (for *doth*)
- * 40. 7 But yet be blam'd, if thou *this* selfe deceavest (for *thy*)
44. 13 Receiving naughts by elements so sloe
51. 10 Therefore desire (of perfects love being made)
54. 14 When that shall vade, *by* verse distils your truth (for *my*)
56. 13 *As* cal it Winter, which being ful of care (for *or*)
65. 12 Or who his spoile *or* beautie can forbid? (for *of*)
69. 3 All tounge (the voice of soules) give thee that *end* (for *due*)
73. 4 Bare *run'd* quiers where late the sweet birds sang (for *run'd*)
76. 7 That every word doth almost *fel* my name (for *tell*)
91. 9 Thy love is *bitter* then high birth to me (for *better*)
99. 9 *Our* blushing shame, an other white dispaire (for *one*)
- * 102. 8 As Philomell in summers front doth singe,
And stops *his* pipe in growth of riper daies
- * 106. 12 They had not *still* enough your worth to sing (for *skill*)
- * 108. 3 What's new to speake, what *now* to register (for *new*)
113. 6 Of bird, of flowre, or shape which it doth *lack* (for *latch*)
- * 127. 9 Therefore my Mistersse *eyes* are Raven blacke
Her *eyes* so suited (where the first *eyes* must be wrong)
129. 9-11 *Made* In pursut and in possession so (for *mad in*)
Had, having, and in quest, to have extreame
A blisse in prooffe and *proud and* very wo (for *prou'd u*)
144. 6 Tempteth my better angel from my *sight* (for *side*)

It is fair to add that in six of these twenty cases, those marked with an asterisk, Mr. Wyndham keeps the Quarto text, and endeavours to make sense of it; I do not think with success. There are three other cases where I believe

the Quarto text to be corrupt, but where Mr. Wyndham is not quite alone in defending it.

Sonnet 41. 7, 8 And when a woman woes, what womans sonne,
Will sourely leave her till *he* have prevailed.

5S. 9-12 Be where you list, your charter is so strong,
That you your selfe may priuiledge your time
To what you will, to you it doth belong,
Your selfe to pardon of selfe-doing crime.

120.9 O that *our* night of wo might have remembred

There is no need to follow Mr. Wyndham in his analysis of the reasons which led the printer in this and that case to use capitals or italics. The blunders in words and punctuation are sufficient by themselves to prove that Shakespeare did not see his book of sonnets through the press.

That is not, of course, in itself a proof that Shakespeare did not authorise the publication. We may conjecture that any ordinary writer, in giving to the world poems which were to confer immortality on a friend, would have taken some trouble to avoid absurd blunders; but we cannot be sure what Shakespeare would have done. The only argument on one side or the other must be drawn from a consideration of the state of the text of the two poems which he himself certainly put to press, — *Venus and Adonis* and *The Rape of Lucrece*. In the first edition of *Venus and Adonis* there occur the following misprints, not reckoning mere eccentricities of spelling, of which no notice has been taken in regard to the sonnets:

line 185 *So wiring* his cheeks (for *souring*)

615 Thou know'st *not* what it is (for *not*)

1053 Whose wonted lily white

With purple tears, that his wound wept, *had* drenched
(for *was*, attracted by "had trenched" above).

That is to say, in 1194 lines we find three slight faults, whereas in the 2155 lines of the sonnets we have enumerated some

three dozen. In the 1855 lines of *Lucretia* we also find three faults, all towards the end of the poem, as though the poet had left the last few pages to the printer's care.

- Line 1544 To me came Tarquin armed *to* beguile (for *so*)
 1680 To drown *on* woe, one pair of weeping eyes (for *one* or *in*)
 1713 Carved *it in* with tears (for *in it*)

An examination therefore of the *editio princeps* of each of these poems leaves no doubt that the poet himself was interested in the correctness of his text; and that being so, we must reject the theory that he was responsible for the publication of the Sonnets by Thorpe in the Quarto of 1609.

XI. THE SEQUENCE OF THE SONNETS

The Sonnets fall into two groups, the first hundred and twenty-six being addressed to a youth, the remainder, forming an appendix, being addressed to, or written about, the woman who figures so ill-omenedly in the main series. Most modern critics are agreed that at least the first division of the Sonnets is approximately in the order intended by the poet. Mr. Lee seems to attribute the order to Thorpe. "If the critical ingenuity," he says, "which has detected a continuous thread of narrative in the order that Thorpe printed Shakespeare's Sonnets, were applied to the bookseller's miscellany of sonnets called *Diana* (1590), that volume, which rakes together sonnets on all kinds of amorous subjects from all quarters and numbers them consecutively, could be made to reveal the sequence of an individual lover's moods quite as readily, and if no external evidence were admitted quite as convincingly, as Thorpe's collection of Shakespeare's sonnets" (*Life*, p. 96, n.). But Mr. Lee allows certain sequences in the current arrangement, such as 1-17, 27-28, 32-35, 40-62, 71-74, 78-86, 95-96, 100-103, 124-125; so that his scepticism extends only to the gaps between

these well-marked groups; and it is probably to be explained as a reaction from the over-subtlety displayed by Professor Dowden in devising links of connection. In only one instance does Mr. Lee suggest an inconsistency between one sonnet and another so great that we cannot suppose them addressed to the same person, and that is the contrast between the sonnets (33-35) which charge the friend with paying court to the poet's mistress and a subsequent sonnet (70) which credits him with "a pure unstained prime." The point is one that must strike every reader of the sonnets, and the reconciliation would possibly be simple if we knew all the facts; but even in the sonnets themselves two facts are absolutely luminous: First, that it was the mistress who courted the friend rather than the friend who courted the mistress (46, 62, 133, 134). We do not know how far the intrigue went; but we know the friend's ingratitude was forgiven (34). The second fact is that the group of sonnets in which 70 is included implies that the friend had been keeping bad company and doing things which brought his name into bad repute.

They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that in guess *they measure by thy deeds* (69. 9, 10);

which, it is implied, were not good deeds. Sonnet 70 indubitably follows 69; but it is, on the surface, as inconsistent with it as with the group 33-35. Whether the explanation be that Shakespeare was hoping the best and giving precept in the form of praise, we cannot say; but the point to notice here is that as 69 and 70 cannot be separated, the inconsistency cannot be got rid of by the hypothesis of more friends than one. The fact noticed above, that some of the sonnets in the appendix throw light on those addressed to the friend, confirms the theory that the sonnets do form a sequence and are not a mere bookseller's haphazard collection.¹

¹ It may be right to mention here Professor Dowden's attempt to corroborate the Quarto arrangement by an examination of the use of *thou* and *you* in sonnets

Some further confirmation is afforded by the fact that a printer's error of *their* for *thy* (see Section X) occurs fourteen times in the series of sonnets from 26 to 70 inclusive, and only once besides, viz. in 128. (This last instance forbids us to explain it by a mere change of compositors.) Sonnet 26 appears to open a new division, and 71 certainly opens another. It looks, therefore, as if the printer had used for this division of the sonnets a separate manuscript, less plainly written than those he had before him for the rest, and so it becomes almost certain that — at any rate for this section — the order of the sonnets was fixed when it came into Thorpe's hands. Sonnet 128 may very well have been included in the same manuscript, for the sonnets in the appendix are contemporaneous with those in the main division, and it must in any case have been relegated to the appendix as referring to the poet's mistress.

But, although we may, speaking generally, defend the order in which the first section of the sonnets are given in the Quarto, it may very well be the case that some few are misplaced; 36-39, if they are rightly placed, do not explain their position; 75 would come better after 52; 77 and 81 interrupt the series on the Rival Poet; and Professor Herford notes that "the three *Absence* sonnets, 97-99, betray a frank and joyous confidence hard to reconcile with the desolate 'farewell' note of the previous group and with

addressed to the friend. "In the first fifty sonnets *you* is of extremely rare occurrence, in the second fifty *you* and *thou* alternate in little groups of sonnets, *thou* having still a preponderance, but now only a slight preponderance; in the remaining twenty-six *you* becomes the ordinary mode of address and *thou* the exception." It seems at first sight fair to argue that if *thou* or *you* has a long run of use the sonnets in each series may be presumed consecutive. But how little dependence can be placed on such an argument is shown by the fact that in the sonnets about the Rival Poet, which undoubtedly form a series, sometimes *thou* is used and sometimes *you*. And in face of the fact that 97 and 98, which are almost identical in sense, employ different pronouns, it is impossible to discriminate between them as to the degree of affection they imply.

the silence which follows." In the main, however, the order justifies itself to an attentive reader.

I have called Sonnets 127 to the end an appendix because they do not, like the first hundred and twenty-six, form a connected series on a single theme, but are largely concerned with an incident already handled in the earlier part of the first series, only from another point of view. It looks as if all the sonnets not addressed to the friend had been thrown together without arrangement at the end of the series with other occasional sonnets. The two concluding sonnets, which are alternative studies of a Greek epigram, have no relevancy to the rest, and the 146th sonnet, which must be the Envoy on the model of the concluding sonnet of *Astrophel and Stella*, comes next to a merely pretty piece of *vers de société*. The point of connection between the main series and the sonnets to a lady in the appendix is Sonnet 144, which sets out how the poet has "two loves," a man and a woman, an angel and a devil, and how the "worser spirit" is endeavouring to corrupt the better. The incident is plainly that referred to in Sonnets 40-42, and it is handled again from various points of view in Sonnets 133-136, 143. Most of the other sonnets in the appendix describe the poet's attraction and repulsion to this woman, who, without great beauty and without virtue, had laid a spell upon him. The mood varies from tender or playful supplication, as in 128 and 132, to pathetic remonstrance, as in 139 and 140, or fierce denunciation mingled with brutal jests. So far as not a few of these sonnets are concerned, we may feel, in the familiar words of Hallam, that "it is impossible not to wish that Shakespeare had never written them." Except for the magnificent Sonnet 129, the loss to the world would not have been great had they perished; though we should have lost the tender grace of 132, and such fine openings as those of 148 and 151. Professor Minto has defended

them "as exercises of skill, undertaken in a spirit of wanton defiance and derision of commonplace." Such a view seems to me to make them altogether intolerable by removing their one justification of sincerity, and also it does not seem to fit the facts. There are too many details not now understood (e.g. in 134 and 137) for us to presume them altogether imaginary.

It has not been thought necessary in this edition to supply a *résumé* of the contents of either series. Those who come to them here for the first time will find the sections into which they have been divided a sufficient guide to their subject-matter.

It may be worth while to conclude this Introduction by quoting two judgments as to the literary merit of the sonnets by persons whose capacity for estimating them will not be disputed. Wordsworth, in the supplementary essay to his Preface (1815), says: "There is extant a small Volume of miscellaneous Poems in which Shakespeare expresses his own feelings in his own Person. . . . There is not a part of the writings of this Poet where is found in an equal compass a greater number of exquisite feelings felicitously expressed," and in a footnote he adds: "For the various merits of thought and language in Shakespeare's Sonnets, see Numbers 27, 29, 30, 32, 33, 54, 64, 66, 68, 73, 76, 86, 91, 92, 93, 97, 98, 105, 107, 108, 109, 111, 113, 114, 116, 117, 129, and many others." The other opinion shall be Hallam's, which is the more weighty as the enthusiastic friendship which the sonnets chronicle offended his taste, and he went so far in his repugnance as to wish that Shakespeare had never written them. "They rise in estimation as we attentively read and reflect upon them. No one ever entered more fully than Shakespeare into the character of this species of poetry, which admits of no expletive imagery, no merely ornamental line" (*Literature of Europe*, III, 38).

THE
SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE

TO. THE. ONLIE. BEGETTER. OF.
THESE. INSVING. SONNETS.
MR. W. H. ALL. HAPPINESSE.
AND. THAT. ETERNITIE.
PROMISED.
BY.
OVR. EVER-LIVING. POET.
WISHETH.
THE. WELL-WISHING.
ADVENTVRER. IN.
SETTING.
FORTH.
T. T.

THE
SONNETS OF SHAKESPEARE

[WRITTEN TO W. II.]

*[The friend's beauty deserves immortality in children
and in verse.]*

I

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
But as the ripper should by time decease,
His tender heir might bear his memory :
But thou, contracted to thine own bright eyes, 5
Feed'st thy light's flame with self-substantial fuel,
Making a famine where abundance lies,
Thyself thy foe, to thy sweet self too cruel.
Thou that art now the world's fresh ornament
And only herald to the gaudy spring, 10
Within thine own buduriest thy content
And, tender churl, mak'st waste in niggarding.
Pity the world, or else this glutton be,
To eat the world's due, by the grave and thee.

2

When forty winters shall besiege thy brow,
And dig deep trenches in thy beauty's field,
Thy youth's proud livery, so gazed on now,
Will be a tatter'd weed, of small worth held :
Then being ask'd where all thy beauty lies, 5

Where all the treasure of thy lusty days,
 To say, within thine own deep-sunken eyes,
 Were an all-eating shame and thriftless praise.
 How much more praise deserved thy beauty's use,
 If thou couldst answer 'This fair child of mine 10
 Shall sum my count and make my old excuse,'
 Proving his beauty by succession thine!
 This were to be new made when thou art old,
 And see thy blood warm when thou feel'st it cold.

3

Look in thy glass, and tell the face thou viewest
 Now is the time that face should form another;
 Whose fresh repair if now thou not renewest,
 Thou dost beguile the world, unbless some mother.
 For where is she so fair whose unear'd womb
 Disdains the tillage of thy husbandry?
 Or who is he so fond will be the tomb
 Of his self-love, to stop posterity?
 Thou art thy mother's glass, and she in thee 10
 Calls back the lovely April of her prime:
 So thou through windows of thine age shalt see
 Despite of wrinkles this thy golden time.
 But if thou live, remember'd not to be,
 Die single, and thine image dies with thee.

4

Unthrifty loveliness, why dost thou spend
 Upon thyself thy beauty's legacy?
 Nature's bequest gives nothing, but doth lend,
 And being frank she lends to those are free.
 Then, beauteous niggard, why dost thou abuse
 The bounteous largess given thee to give?

Profitless usurer, why dost thou use
 So great a sum of sums, yet canst not live?
 For having traffic with thyself alone,
 Thou of thyself thy sweet self dost deceive. 10
 Then how, when nature calls thee to be gone,
 What acceptable audit canst thou leave?
 Thy unus'd beauty must be tomb'd with thee,
 Which, used, lives th' executor to be.

5

Those hours, that with gentle work did frame
 The lovely gaze where every eye doth dwell,
 Will play the tyrants to the very same *de*
 And that unfair which fairly doth excel;
 For never-resting time leads summer on 5
 To hideous winter and confounds him there;
 Sap check'd with frost and lusty leaves quite gone,
 Beauty o'ersnow'd and bareness every where:
 Then, were not summer's distillation left,
 A liquid prisoner pent in walls of glass, 10
 Beauty's effect with beauty were bereft,
 Nor it nor no remembrance what it was:
 But flowers distill'd, though they with winter meet,
 Leese but their show; their substance still lives sweet.

6

Then let not winter's ragged hand deface
 In thee thy summer, ere thou be distill'd:
 Make sweet some vial; treasure thou some place
 With beauty's treasure, ere it be self-kill'd.
 That use is not forbidden usury 5
 Which happies those that pay the willing loan;
 That's for thyself to breed another thee,

Or ten times happier, be it ten for one ;
 Ten times thyself were happier than thou art,
 If ten of thine ten times refigured thee : 10
 Then what could death do, if thou shouldst depart,
 Leaving thee living in posterity?
 Be not self-will'd, for thou art much too fair
 To be death's conquest and make worms thine heir.

7

Lo, in the orient when the gracious light
 Lifts up his burning head, each under eye
 Doth homage to his new-appearing sight,
 Serving with looks his sacred majesty ;
 And having climb'd the steep-up heavenly hill, 5
 Resembling strong youth in his middle age,
 Yet mortal looks adore his beauty still,
 Attending on his golden pilgrimage ;
 But when from highmost pitch, with weary car,
 Like feeble age, he reeleth from the day, 10
 The eyes, 'fore duteous, now converted are
 From his low tract and look another way :
 So thou, thyself out-going in thy noon,
 Unlook'd on diest, unless thou get a son.

8

Music to hear, why hear'st thou music sadly ?
 Sweets with sweets war not, joy delights in joy.
 Why lov'st thou that which thou receiv'st not gladly,
 Or else receiv'st with pleasure thine annoy ?
 If the true concord of well-tuned sounds, 5
 By unions married, do offend thine ear,
 They do but sweetly chide thee, who confounds
 In singleness the parts that thou shouldst bear.

Mark how one string, sweet husband to another,
 Strikes each in each by mutual ordering, 10
 Resembling sire and child and happy mother,
 Who, all in one, one pleasing note do sing :
 Whose speechless song, being many, seeming one,
 Sings this to thee : *thou single wilt prove none.*

9

Is it for fear to wet a widow's eye
 That thou consum'st thyself in single life ?
 Ah ! if thou issueless shalt hap to die,
 The world will wail thee, like a makeless wife ;
 The world will be thy widow and still weep 5
 That thou no form of thee hast left behind,
 When every private widow well may keep
 By children's eyes her husband's shape in mind.
 Look, what an unthrift in the world doth spend
 Shifts but his place, for still the world enjoys it ; 10
 But beauty's waste hath in the world an end,
 And, kept unused, the user so destroys it.
 No love toward others in that bosom sits
 That on himself such murderous shame commits.

10

For shame deny that thou bear'st love to any,
 Who for thyself art so unprovident.
 Grant, if thou wilt, thou art beloved of many,
 But that thou none lov'st is most evident ;
 For thou art so possess'd with murderous hate 5
 That 'gainst thyself thou stick'st not to conspire,
 Seeking that beauteous roof to ruinate
 Which to repair should be thy chief desire.
 O, change thy thought, that I may change my mind !

Shall hate be fairer lodged than gentle love ? 10
 Be, as thy presence is, gracious and kind,
 Or to thyself at least kind-hearted prove :
 Make thee another self, for love of me,
 That beauty still may live in thine or thee.

11

As fast as thou shalt wane, so fast thou grow'st
 In one of thine, from that which thou departest ;
 And that fresh blood which youngly thou bestow'st
 Thou mayst call thine when thou from youth convertest.
 Herein lives wisdom, beauty, and increase ; 5
 Without this, folly, age, and cold decay :
 If all were minded so, the times should cease
 And threescore year would make the world away.
 Let those whom Nature hath not made for store,
 Harsh featureless and rude, barrenly perish : 10
 Look, whom she best endow'd she gave thee more ;
 Which bounteous gift thou shouldst in bounty cherish :
 She carved thee for her seal, and meant thereby
 Thou shouldst print more, not let that copy die.

12

When I do count the clock that tells the time,
 And see the brave day sunk in hideous night ;
 When I behold the violet past prime,
 And sable curls all silver'd o'er with white ;
 When lofty trees I see barren of leaves
 Which erst from heat did canopy the herd,
 And summer's green, all girded up in sheaves,
 Borne on the bier with white and bristly beard
 Then of thy beauty do I question make,
 That thou among the wastes of time must go, 10

Since sweets and beauties do themselves forsake
And die as fast as they see others grow ;
And nothing 'gainst Time's scythe can make defence
Save breed, to brave him when he takes thee hence.

13

O, that you were yourself ! but, love, you are
No longer yours than you yourself here live :
Against this coming end you should prepare,
And your sweet semblance to some other give.
So should that beauty which you hold in lease 5
Find no determination ; then you were
Yourself again after yourself's decease,
When your sweet issue your sweet form should bear.
Who lets so fair a house fall to decay,
Which husbandry in honour might uphold 10
Against the stormy gusts of winter's day
And barren rage of death's eternal cold ?
O, none but unthrifths ! Dear my love, you know
You had a father ; let your son say so.

14

Not from the stars do I my judgement pluck ;
And yet methinks I have astronomy,
But not to tell of good or evil luck,
Of plagues, of dearths, or seasons' quality ;
Nor can I fortune to brief minutes tell, 5
Pointing to each his thunder, rain and wind,
Or say with princes if it shall go well,
By oft predict that I in heaven find :
But from thine eyes my knowledge I derive,
And, constant stars, in them I read such art, 10
As truth and beauty shall together thrive,

If from thyself to store thou wouldst convert ;
Or else of thee this I prognosticate :
Thy end is truth's and beauty's doom and date.

15

When I consider every thing that grows
Holds in perfection but a little moment,
That this huge stage presenteth nought but shows
Whereon the stars in secret influence comment ;
When I perceive that men as plants increase, 5
Cheered and check'd even by the self-same sky,
Vaunt in their youthful sap, at height decrease,
And wear their brave state out of memory ;
Then the conceit of this inconstant stay
Sets you most rich in youth before my sight, 10
Where wasteful Time debateth with Decay,
To change your day of youth to sullied night ;
And all in war with Time for love of you,
As he takes from you, I engraft you new.

16

But wherefore do not you a mightier way
Make war upon this bloody tyrant, Time ?
And fortify yourself in your decay
With means more blessed than my barren rime ?
Now stand you on the top of happy hours, 5
And many maiden gardens, yet unset,
With virtuous wish would bear you living flowers,
Much liker than your painted counterfeit :
So should the lines of life that life repair,
Which this time's pencil, or my pupil pen, 10
Neither in inward worth nor outward fair,
Can make you live yourself in eyes of men.

To give away yourself keeps yourself still ;
And you must live, drawn by your own sweet skill.

17

Who will believe my verse in time to come,
If it were fill'd with your most high deserts ?
Though yet, heaven knows, it is but as a tomb
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.
If I could write the beauty of your eyes 5
And in fresh numbers number all your graces,
The age to come would say ' This poet lies ;
Such heavenly touches ne'er touch'd earthly faces.'
So should my papers yellow'd with their age
Be scorn'd like old men of less truth than tongue, 10
And your true rights be term'd a poet's rage
And stretched metre of an antique song :
But were some child of yours alive that time,
You should live twice, in it and in my rime.

18

Shall I compare thee to a summer's day? *a*
'Thou art more lovely and more temperate: {
Rough winds do shake the darling buds of May, *a*
And summer's lease hath all too short a date: {
Sometime too hot the eye of heaven shines; *c* 5
And often is his gold complexion dimm'd; *d*
And every fair from fair sometime declines
By chance or nature's changing course untrimm'd ;
But thy eternal summer shall not fade *e*
Nor lose possession of that fair thou ow'st ; 10
Nor shall Death brag thou wander'st in his shade,
When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st :
' So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this and this gives life to thee.

19

Devouring Time, blunt thou the lion's paws,
 And make the earth devour her own sweet brood ;
 Pluck the keen teeth from the fierce tiger's jaws,
 And burn the long-lived phœnix in her blood ;
 Make glad and sorry seasons as thou fleets, 5
 And do whate'er thou wilt, swift-footed Time,
 To the wide world and all her fading sweets ;
 But I forbid thee one most heinous crime :
 O, carve not with thy hours my love's fair brow,
 Nor draw no lines there with thine antique pen ; 10
 Him in thy course untainted do allow
 For beauty's pattern to succeeding men.

Yet, do thy worst, old Time : despite thy wrong,
 My love shall in my verse ever live young.

[*The poet's love for his friend.*]

20

A woman's face with Nature's own hand painted
 Hast thou, the master-mistress of my passion ;
 A woman's gentle heart, but not acquainted
 With shifting change, as is false women's fashion ;
 An eye more bright than theirs, less false in rolling, 5
 Gilding the object whereupon it gazeth ;
 † A man in hue, all hues in his controlling,
 Which steals men's eyes and women's souls amazeth.
 And for a woman wert thou first created ;
 Till Nature, as she wrought thee, fell a-doting, 10
 And by addition me of thee defeated,
 By adding one thing to my purpose nothing.
 But since she prick'd thee out for women's pleasure,
 Mine be thy love and thy love's use their treasure.

21

So is it not with me as with that Muse
Stirr'd by a painted beauty to his verse,
Who heaven itself for ornament doth use
And every fair with his fair doth rehearse,
Making a couplement of proud compare 5
With sun and moon, with earth and sea's rich gems,
With April's first-born flowers, and all things rare
That heaven's air in this huge rondure hems.
O let me, true in love, but truly write,
And then believe me, my love is as fair 10
As any mother's child, though not so bright
As those gold candles fix'd in heaven's air :
Let them say more that like of hearsay well ;
I will not praise that purpose not to sell.

22

My glass shall not persuade me I am old,
So long as youth and thou are of one date ;
But when in thee time's furrows I behold,
Then look I death my days should expiate.
For all that beauty that doth cover thee 5
Is but the seemly raiment of my heart,
Which in thy breast doth live as thine in me :
How can I then be elder than thou art ?
O therefore, love, be of thyself so wary
As I, not for myself but for thee, will ; 10
Bearing thy heart, which I will keep so chary
As tender nurse her babe from faring ill.
Presume not on thy heart when mine is slain ;
Thou gavest me thine, not to give back again.

23

As an unperfect actor on the stage
Who with his fear is put beside his part,
Or some fierce thing replete with too much rage,
Whose strength's abundance weakens his own heart,
So I, for fear of trust, forget to say 5
The perfect ceremony of love's rite,
And in mine own love's strength seem to decay,
O'ercharged with burden of mine own love's might.
O, let my looks be then the eloquence
And dumb presagers of my speaking breast; 10
Who plead for love and look for recompense
More than that tongue that more hath more express'd.
O, learn to read what silent love hath writ :
To hear with eyes belongs to love's fine wit.

24

Mine eye hath play'd the painter and hath stell'd
Thy beauty's form in table of my heart ;
My body is the frame wherein 't is held,
And perspective it is best painter's art.
For through the painter must you see his skill, 5
To find where your true image pictured lies ;
Which in my bosom's shop is hanging still,
That hath his windows glazed with thine eyes.
Now see what good turns eyes for eyes have done :
Mine eyes have drawn thy shape, and thine for me 10
Are windows to my breast, where-through the sun
Delights to peep, to gaze therein on thee ;
Yet eyes this cunning want to grace their art,
They draw but what they see, know not the heart.

25

Let those who are in favour with their stars
Of public honour and proud titles boast,
Whilst I, whom fortune of such triumph bars,
Unlook'd for joy in that I honour most.
Great princes' favourites their fair leaves spread 5
But as the marigold at the sun's eye,
And in themselves their pride lies buried,
For at a frown they in their glory die.
The painful warrior famoused for fight,
After a thousand victories once foil'd, 10
Is from the book of honour razed quite,
And all the rest forgot for which he toil'd :
 Then happy I, that love and am beloved
 Where I may not remove nor be removed.

[*Thoughts in absence.*]

26

Lord of my love, to whom in vassalage
Thy merit hath my duty strongly knit,
To thee I send this written ambassage,
To witness duty, not to show my wit :
Duty so great, which wit so poor as mine 5
May make seem bare, in wanting words to show it,
But that I hope some good conceit of thine
In thy soul's thought, all naked, will bestow it ;
Till whatsoever star that guides my moving
Points on me graciously with fair aspect 10
And puts apparel on my tatter'd loving,
To show me worthy of thy sweet respect :
 Then may I dare to boast how I do love thee ;
 Till then not show my head where thou mayst prove me.

27

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
The dear repose for limbs with travel tired ;
But then begins a journey in my head,
To work my mind, when body's work 's expired :
For then my thoughts, from far where I abide, 5
Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
Looking on darkness which the blind do see :
Save that my soul's imaginary sight
Presents thy shadow to my sightless view, 10
Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.
Lo! thus, by day my limbs, by night my mind,
For thee and for myself no quiet find.

28

How can I then return in happy plight,
That am debarr'd the benefit of rest?
When day's oppression is not eased by night,
But day by night, and night by day, oppress'd?
And each, though enemies to either's reign, 5
Do in consent shake hands to torture me ;
The one by toil, the other to complain
How far I toil, still farther off from thee.
I tell the day, to please him, thou art bright,
And dost him grace when clouds do blot the heaven : 10
So flatter I the swart-complexion'd night ;
When sparkling stars twire not thou gild'st the even.
But day doth daily draw my sorrows longer,
And night doth nightly make grief's strength seem
stronger.

29 ✓

When, in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,
 I all alone beweepe my outcast state,
 And trouble deaf heaven with my bootless cries,
 And look upon myself and curse my fate,
 Wishing me like to one more rich in hope, 5
 Featured like him, like him with friends possess'd,
 Desiring this man's art and that man's scope,
 With what I most enjoy contented least ;
 Yet in these thoughts myself almost despising,
 Haply I think on thee, and then my state, 10
 Like to the lark at break of day arising
 From sullen earth, sings hymns at heaven's gate ;
 For thy sweet love remember'd such wealth brings
 That then I scorn to change my state with kings.

30

When to the sessions of sweet silent thought
 I summon up remembrance of things past,
 I sigh the lack of many a thing I sought,
 And with old woes new wail my dear time's waste:
 Then can I drown an eye, unused to flow, 5
 For precious friends hid in death's dateless night,
 And weep afresh love's long since cancell'd woe,
 And moan the expense of many a vanish'd sight :
 Then can I grieve at grievances foregone,
 And heavily from woe to woe tell o'er 10
 The sad account of fore-bemoaned moan,
 Which I new pay as if not paid before.
 But if the while I think on thee, dear friend,
 All losses are restored and sorrows end.

[*The friend's wrong-doing, confession, and forgiveness.*]

33

Full many a glorious morning have I seen
Flatter the mountain-tops with sovereign eye,
Kissing with golden face the meadows green,
Gilding pale streams with heavenly alchemy;
Anon permit the basest clouds to ride 5
With ugly rack on his celestial face,
And from the forlorn world his visage hide,
Stealing unseen to west with this disgrace:
Even so my sun one early morn did shine
With all-triumphant splendour on my brow; 10
But, out alack ! he was but one hour mine,
The region cloud hath mask'd him from me now.
Yet him for this my love no whit disdaineth;
Suns of the world may stain when heaven's sun staineth.

34

Why didst thou promise such a beauteous day,
And make me travel forth without my cloak,
To let base clouds o'ertake me in my way,
Hiding thy bravery in their rotten smoke ?
'Tis not enough that through the cloud thou break, 5
To dry the rain on my storm-beaten face,
For no man well of such a salve can speak
That heals the wound and cures not the disgrace :
Nor can thy shame give physic to my grief ;
Though thou repent, yet I have still the loss : 10
The offender's sorrow lends but weak relief
To him that bears the strong offence's cross.
Ah ! but those tears are pearl which thy love sheds,
And they are rich and ransom all ill deeds.

35

No more be grieved at that which thou hast done :
 Roses have thorns, and silver fountains mud ;
 Clouds and eclipses stain both moon and sun,
 And loathsome canker lives in sweetest bud.
 All men make faults, and even I in this, 5
 Authórizing thy trespass with compare,
 Myself corrupting, salving thy amiss,
 † Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are ;
 For to thy sensual fault I bring in sense —
 Thy adverse party is thy advocate — 10
 And 'gainst myself a lawful plea commence :
 Such civil war is in my love and hate,
 That I an accessary needs must be
 To that sweet thief which sourly robs from me.

[*The poet's 'guilt' and the friend's truth; written in absence.*]

36

Let me confess that we two must be twain,
 Although our undivided loves are one :
 So shall those blots that do with me remain
 Without thy help by me be borne alone.
 In our two loves there is but one respect, 5
 Though in our lives a separable spite,
 Which though it alter not love's sole effect,
 Yet doth it steal sweet hours from love's delight.
 I may not evermore acknowledge thee,
 Lest my bewailed guilt should do thee shame, 10
 Nor thou with public kindness honour me,
 Unless thou take that honour from thy name :
 But do not so ; I love thee in such sort
 As, thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

37

As a decrepit father takes delight
To see his active child do deeds of youth,
So I, made lame by fortune's dearest spite,
Take all my comfort of thy worth and truth.
For whether beauty, birth, or wealth, or wit, 5
Or any of these all, or all, or more,
Entitled in thy parts do crowned sit,
I make my love engrafted to this store :
So then I am not lame, poor, nor despised,
Whilst that this shadow doth such substance give 10
That I in thy abundance am sufficed
And by a part of all thy glory live.
Look, what is best, that best I wish in thee :
This wish I have ; then ten times happy me !

38

How can my Muse want subject to invent,
While thou dost breathe, that pour'st into my verse
Thine own sweet argument, too excellent
For every vulgar paper to rehearse ?
O, give thyself the thanks, if aught in me 5
Worthy perusal stand against thy sight ;
For who's so dumb that cannot write to thee,
When thou thyself dost give invention light ?
Be thou the tenth Muse, ten times more in worth
Than those old nine which rimers invoke ; 10
And he that calls on thee, let him bring forth
Eternal numbers to outlive long date.
If my slight Muse do please these curious days,
The pain be mine, but thine shall be the praise.

39

O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
 When thou art all the better part of me ?
 What can mine own praise to mine own self bring ?
 And what is 't but mine own when I praise thee ?
 Even for this let us divided live, 5
 And our dear love lose name of single one,
 That by this separation I may give
 That due to thee which thou deserv'st alone.
 O absence, what a torment wouldst thou prove,
 Were it not thy sour leisure gave sweet leave 10
 To entertain the time with thoughts of love,
 Which time and thoughts so sweetly doth deceive,
 And that thou teachest how to make one twain,
 By praising him here who doth hence remain !

[*The friend's wrong to friendship.*]

40

Take all my loves, my love, yea, take them all ;
 What hast thou then more than thou hadst before ?
 No love, my love, that thou mayst true love call ;
 All mine was thine before thou hadst this more.
 Then if for my love thou my love receivest, 5
 I cannot blame thee for my love thou usest ;
 But yet be blamed, if thou thyself deceivest
 By wilful taste of what thyself refuseth.
 I do forgive thy robbery, gentle thief,
 Although thou steal thee all my poverty ; 10
 And yet, love knows it is a greater grief
 To bear love's wrong than hate's known injury.
 Lascivious grace, in whom all ill well shows,
 Kill me with spites ; yet we must not be foes.

41

Those pretty wrongs that liberty commits,
When I am sometime absent from thy heart,
Thy beauty and thy years full well befits,
For still temptation follows where thou art.
Gentle thou art and therefore to be won, 5
Beauteous thou art, therefore to be assailed ;
And when a woman woos, what woman's son
Will sourly leave her till she have prevailed ?
Ay me ! but yet thou mightst my seat forbear,
And chide thy beauty and thy straying youth, 10
Who lead thee in their riot even there
Where thou art forced to break a twofold truth,
Hers, by thy beauty tempting her to thee,
Thine, by thy beauty being false to me.

42

That thou hast her, it is not all my grief,
And yet it may be said I loved her dearly ;
That she hath thee, is of my wailing chief,
A loss in love that touches me more nearly.
Loving offenders, thus I will excuse ye : 5
Thou dost love her, because thou know'st I love her ;
And for my sake even so doth she abuse me,
Suffering my friend for my sake to approve her.
If I lose thee, my loss is my love's gain,
And losing her, my friend hath found that loss ; 10
Both find each other, and I lose both twain,
And both for my sake lay on me this cross :
But here 's the joy ; my friend and I are one ;
Sweet flattery ! then she loves but me alone.

[*Thoughts in absence.*]

43

When most I wink, then do mine eyes best see,
For all the day they view things unrespected ;
But when I sleep, in dreams they look on thee,
And darkly bright are bright in dark directed.
Then thou, whose shadow shadows doth make bright, 5
How would thy shadow's form form happy show
To the clear day with thy much clearer light,
When to unseeing eyes thy shade shines so !
How would, I say, mine eyes be blessed made
By looking on thee in the living day, 10
When in dead night thy fair imperfect shade
Through heavy sleep on sightless eyes doth stay !
 All days are nights to see till I see thee,
 And nights bright days when dreams do show thee me.

44

If the dull substance of my flesh were thought,
Injurious distance should not stop my way ;
For then despite of space I would be brought,
From limits far remote, where thou dost stay.
No matter then although my foot did stand 5
Upon the farthest earth removed from thee ;
For nimble thought can jump both sea and land
As soon as think the place where he would be.
But, ah ! thought kills me that I am not thought,
To leap large lengths of miles when thou art gone, 10
But that, so much of earth and water wrought,
I must attend time's leisure with my moan,
 Receiving nought by elements so slow
 But heavy tears, badges of either's woe.

45

The other two, slight air and purging fire,
Are both with thee, wherever I abide ;
The first my thought, the other my desire,
These present-absent with swift motion slide.
For when these quicker elements are gone
In tender embassy of love to thee,
My life, being made of four, with two alone
Sinks down to death, oppress'd with melancholy ;
Until life's composition be recured
By those swift messengers return'd from thee,
Who even but now come back again, assured
Of thy fair health, recounting it to me :
This told, I joy ; but then no longer glad,
I send them back again and straight grow sad.

46

Mine eye and heart are at a mortal war
How to divide the conquest of thy sight;
Mine eye my heart thy picture's sight would bar,
My heart mine eye the freedom of that right.
My heart doth plead that thou in him dost lie, 5
A closet never pierced with crystal eyes,
But the defendant doth that plea deny,
And says in him thy fair appearance lies.
To 'cide this title is impaneled
A quest of thoughts, all tenants to the heart; 10
And by their verdict is determined
The clear eye's moiety and the dear heart's part:
As thus; mine eye's due is thy outward part,
And my heart's right thy inward love of heart.

47

Betwixt mine eye and heart a league is took,
And each doth good turns now unto the other :
When that mine eye is famish'd for a look,
Or heart in love with sighs himself doth smother,
With my love's picture then my eye doth feast 5
And to the painted banquet bids my heart ;
Another time mine eye is my heart's guest
And in his thoughts of love doth share a part :
So, either by thy picture or my love,
Thyself away art present still with me 10
For thou not farther than my thoughts canst move,
And I am still with them and they with thee ;
Or, if they sleep, thy picture in my sight
Awakes my heart to heart's and eye's delight.

48

How careful was I, when I took my way,
Each trifle under truest bars to thrust,
That to my use it might unused stay
From hands of falsehood, in sure wards of trust !
But thou, to whom my jewels trifles are, 5
Most worthy comfort, now my greatest grief,
Thou, best of dearest and mine only care,
Art left the prey of every vulgar thief.
Thee have I not lock'd up in any chest,
Save where thou art not, though I feel thou art, 10
Within the gentle closure of my breast,
From whence at pleasure thou mayst come and part ;
And even thence thou wilt be stol'n, I fear,
For truth proves thievish for a prize so dear.

49

Against that time, if ever that time come,
When I shall see thee frown on my defects,
When as thy love hath cast his utmost sum,
Call'd to that audit by advised respects;
Against that time when thou shalt strangely pass, 5
And scarcely greet me with that sun, thine eye,
When love, converted from the thing it was,
Shall reasons find of settled gravity;
Against that time do I ensconce me here
Within the knowledge of mine own desert, 10
And this my hand against myself uprear,
To guard the lawful reasons on thy part :
 To leave poor me thou hast the strength of laws,
 Since why to love I can allege no cause.

50

How heavy do I journey on the way,
When what I seek, my weary travel's end,
Doth teach that ease and that repose to say
‘Thus far the miles are measured from thy friend!’
The beast that bears me, tired with my woe, 5
Plods dully on, to bear that weight in me,
As if by some instinct the wretch did know
His rider loved not speed, being made from thee :
The bloody spur cannot provoke him on
That sometimes anger thrusts into his hide ; 10
Which heavily he answers with a groan,
More sharp to me than spurring to his side ;
 For that same groan doth put this in my mind ;
 My grief lies onward and my joy behind.

[*The friend's beauty and truth, which the poet will immortalize.*]

53

What is your substance, whereof are you made,
 That millions of strange shadows on you tend?
 Since every one hath, every one, one shade,
 And you, but one, can every shadow lend.
 Describe Adonis, and the counterfeit 5
 Is poorly imitated after you ;
 On Helen's cheek all art of beauty set,
 And you in Grecian tires are painted new :
 Speak of the spring and foison of the year ;
 The one doth shadow of your beauty show, 10
 The other as your bounty doth appear ;
 And you in every blessed shape we know.
 In all external grace you have some part,
 But you like none, none you, for constant heart.

54

O, how much more doth beauty beauteous seem
 By that sweet ornament which truth doth give !
 The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem
 For that sweet odour which doth in it live.
 The canker-blooms have full as deep a dye 5
 As the perfumed tincture of the roses,
 Hang on such thorns and play as wantonly
 When summer's breath their masked buds discloses :
 But, for their virtue only is their show,
 They live unwoo'd and unrespected fade, 10
 Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so ;
 Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made :
 And so of you, beauteous and lovely youth,
 When that shall fade, my verse distils your truth.

55

Not marble, nor the gilded monuments
Of princes, shall outlive this powerful rime;
But you shall shine more bright in these contents
Than unswept stone besmear'd with sluttish time.
When wasteful war shall statues overturn, 5
And broils root out the work of masonry,
Nor Mars his sword nor war's quick fire shall burn
The living record of your memory.
'Gainst death and all-oblivious enmity
Shall you pace forth: your praise shall still find room 10
Even in the eyes of all posterity
That wear this world out to the ending doom.
So, till the judgement that yourself arise,
You live in this, and dwell in lovers' eyes.

[*The friend absents himself: the poet submits.*]

56

Sweet love, renew thy force; be it not said
Thy edge should blunter be than appetite,
Which but to-day by feeding is allay'd,
To-morrow sharpen'd in his former might:
So, love, be thou; although to-day thou fill 5
Thy hungry eyes even till they wink with fullness,
To-morrow see again, and do not kill
The spirit of love with a perpetual dullness.
Let this sad interim like the ocean be
Which parts the shore, where two contracted new 10
Come daily to the banks, that, when they see
Return of love, more blest may be the view;
Or call it winter, which being full of care
Makes summer's welcome thrice more wish'd, more rare.

57

Being your slave, what should I do but tend
 Upon the hours and times of your desire?
 I have no precious time at all to spend,
 Nor services to do, till you require.
 Nor dare I chide the world-without-end hour
 Whilst I, my sovereign, watch the clock for you,
 Nor think the bitterness of absence sour
 When you have bid your servant once adieu;
 Nor dare I question with my jealous thought
 Where you may be, or your affairs suppose,
 But, like a sad slave, stay and think of nought
 Save, where you are how happy you make those.
 So true a fool is love that in your will,
 Though you do any thing, he thinks no ill.

58

That god forbid that made me first your slave,
I should in thought control your times of pleasure,
Or at your hand the account of hours to crave,
Being your vassal, bound to stay your leisure!
O, let me suffer, being at your beck,
The imprison'd absence of your liberty ;
And patience, tame to sufferance, bide each check,
Without accusing you of injury.
Be where you list, your charter is so strong
That you yourself may privilege your time ;
Do what you will ; to you it doth belong
Yourself to pardon of self-doing crime.

I am to wait, though waiting so be hell ;
Not blame your pleasure, be it ill or well.

[*Time and Beauty.*]

59

If there be nothing new, but that which is
 Hath been before, how are our brains beguiled,
 Which, labouring for invention, bear amiss
 The second burthen of a former child !
 O, that record could with a backward look, 5
 Even of five hundred courses of the sun,
 Show me your image in some antique book,
 Since mind at first in character was done !
 That I might see what the old world could say
 To this composed wonder of your frame ; 10
 Whether we are mended, or whe'r better they,
 Or whether revolution be the sãme.
 O, sure I am, the wits of former days
 To subjects worse have given admiring praise.

60

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
 So do our minutes hasten to their end ;
 Each changing place with that which goes before,
 In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
 Nativity, once in the main of light, 5
 Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
 Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
 And Time that gave doth now his gift confound.
 'Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth
 And delves the parallels in beauty's brow, 10
 Feeds on the rarities of nature's truth,
 And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow :
 And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
 Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

61

[*The friend still absent.*]

Is it thy will thy image should keep open
My heavy eyelids to the weary night?
Dost thou desire my slumbers should be broken,
While shadows like to thee do mock my sight?
Is it thy spirit that thou send'st from thee 5
So far from home into my deeds to pry,
To find out shames and idle hours in me,
The scope and tenour of thy jealousy?
O, no! thy love, though much, is not so great:
It is my love that keeps mine eye awake; 10
Mine own true love that doth my rest defeat,
To play the watchman ever for thy sake:
For thee watch I whilst thou dost wake elsewhere,
From me far off, with others all too near.

62

Sin of self-love possesseth all mine eye
And all my soul and all my every part;
And for this sin there is no remedy,
It is so grounded inward in my heart.
Methinks no face so gracious is as mine, 5
No shape so true, no truth of such account;
And for myself mine own worth do define,
As I all other in all worths surmount.
But when my glass shows me myself indeed,
Beated and chopp'd with tann'd antiquity, 10
Mine own self-love quite contrary I read;
Self so self-loving were iniquity.
'Tis thee, myself, that for myself I praise,
Painting my age with beauty of thy days.

63

Against my love shall be, as I am now,
With Time's injurious hand crush'd and o'erworn ;
When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles ; when his youthful morn
Hath travell'd on to age's steepy night, 5
And all those beauties whereof now he's king
Are vanishing or vanish'd out of sight,
Stealing away the treasure of his spring ;
For such a time do I now fortify
Against confounding age's cruel knife, 10
That he shall never cut from memory
My sweet love's beauty, though my lover's life :
His beauty shall in these black lines be seen,
And they shall live, and he in them still green.

64

When I have seen by Time's fell hand defaced
The rich proud cost of outworn buried age ;
When sometime lofty towers I see down-razed
And brass eternal slave to mortal rage ;
When I have seen the hungry ocean gain 5
Advantage on the kingdom of the shore,
And the firm soil win of the watery main,
Increasing store with loss and loss with store ;
When I have seen such interchange of state,
Or state itself confounded to decay ; 10
Ruin hath taught me thus to ruminare,
That Time will come and take my love away.
This thought is as a death, which cannot choose
But weep to have that which it fears to lose.

65

Since brass, nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea,
But sad mortality o'er-sways their power,
How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,
Whose action is no stronger than a flower?
O, how shall summer's honey breath hold out
Against the wreckful siege of battering days,
When rocks impregnable are not so stout,
Nor gates of steel so strong, but Time decays?
O fearful meditation! where, alack,
Shall Time's best jewel from Time's chest lie hid?
Or what strong hand can hold his swift foot back?
Or who his spoil of beauty can forbid?
O, none, unless this miracle have might,
That in black ink my love may still shine bright.

[*The good old times.*]

66

Tired with all these, for restless death I cry,
As, to behold desert a beggar born,
And needy nothing trimm'd in jollity,
And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
And gilded honour shamefully misplaced, 5
And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
And strength by limping sway disabled,
And art made tongue-tied by authority,
And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill, 10
And simple truth miscall'd simplicity,
And captive good attending captain ill :
Tired with all these, from these would I be gone,
Save that, to die, I leave my love alone.

67

Ah! wherefore with infection should he live,
 And with his presence grace impiety,
 That sin by him advantage should achieve
 And lace itself with his society?
 Why should false painting imitate his cheek, 5
 And steal dead seeing of his living hue?
 Why should poor beauty indirectly seek
 Roses of shadow, since his rose is true?
 Why should he live, now Nature bankrupt is,
 Beggar'd of blood to blush through lively veins? 10
 For she hath no exchequer now but his,
 And, proud of many, lives upon his gains.
 O, him she stores, to show what wealth she had
 In days long since, before these last so bad.

68

Thus is his cheek the map of days outworn,
 When beauty lived and died as flowers do now,
 Before these bastard signs of fair were born,
 Or durst inhabit on a living brow;
 Before the golden tresses of the dead, 5
 The right of sepulchres, were shorn away,
 To live a second life on second head;
 Ere beauty's dead fleece made another gay:
 In him those holy antique hours are seen,
 Without all ornament, itself and true, 10
 Making no summer of another's green,
 Robbing no old to dress his beauty new;
 And him as for a map doth Nature store,
 To show false Art what beauty was of yore.

[*The friend's beauty and the world.*]

69

Those parts of thee that the world's eye doth view
Want nothing that the thought of hearts can mend;
All tongues, the voice of souls, give thee that due,
Uttering bare truth, even so as foes commend.
Thy outward thus with outward praise is crown'd; 5
But those same tongues that give thee so thine own
In other accents do this praise confound
By seeing farther than the eye hath shown.
They look into the beauty of thy mind,
And that, in guess, they measure by thy deeds; 10
Then, churls, their thoughts, although their eyes were kind,
To thy fair flower add the rank smell of weeds:
But why thy odour matcheth not thy show,
The solve is this, that thou dost common grow.

70

That thou art blamed shall not be thy defect,
For slander's mark was ever yet the fair;
The ornament of beauty is suspect,
A crow that flies in heaven's sweetest air.
So thou be good, slander doth but approve 5
Thy worth the greater, being woo'd of time;
For canker vice the sweetest buds doth love,
And thou present'st a pure unstained prime.
Thou hast pass'd by the ambush of young days,
Either not assail'd, or victor being charged; 10
Yet this thy praise cannot be so thy praise,
To tie up envy evermore enlarged:
If some suspect of ill mask'd not thy show,
Then thou alone kingdoms of hearts shouldst owe.

[*The poet's death.*]

71

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
 Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
 Give warning to the world that I am fled
 From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell :
 Nay, if you read this line, remember not 5
 The hand that writ it ; for I love you so
 That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
 If thinking on me then should make you woe.
 O, if, I say, you look upon this verse
 When I perhaps compounded am with clay, 10
 Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
 But let your love even with my life decay ;
 Lest the wise world should look into your moan
 And mock you with me after I am gone.

72

O, lest the world should task you to recite
 What merit lived in me that you should love,
 After my death, dear love, forget me quite,
 For you in me can nothing worthy prove ;
 Unless you would devise some virtuous lie, 5
 To do more for me than mine own desert,
 And hang more praise upon deceased I
 Than niggard truth would willingly impart :
 O, lest your true love may seem false in this,
 That you for love speak well of me untrue, 10
 My name be buried where my body is,
 And live no more to shame nor me nor you.
 For I am shamed by that which I bring forth,
 And so should you, to love things nothing worth.

73

That time of year thou mayst in me behold
When yellow leaves, or none, or few, do hang
Upon those boughs which shake against the cold,
Bare ruin'd choirs where late the sweet birds sang.
In me thou see'st the twilight of such day 5
As after sunset fadeth in the west ;
Which by and by black night doth take away,
Death's second self, that seals up all in rest.
In me thou see'st the glowing of such fire
That on the ashes of his youth doth lie, 10
As the death-bed whereon it must expire,
Consumed with that which it was nourish'd by.
This thou perceiv'st, which makes thy love more
strong,
To love that well which thou must leave ere long.

74

But be contented : when that fell arrest
Without all bail shall carry me away,
My life hath in this line some interest,
Which for memorial still with thee shall stay.
When thou reviewest this, thou dost review 5
The very part was consecrate to thee :
The earth can have but earth, which is his due ;
My spirit is thine, the better part of me :
So then thou hast but lost the dregs of life,
The prey of worms, my body, being dead, 10
The coward conquest of a wretch's knife,
Too base of thee to be remembered.
The worth of that is that which it contains,
And that is this, and this with thee remains.

75

[*The poet a miser.*]

So are you to my thoughts as food to life,
 Or as sweet-season'd showers are to the ground ;
 And for the peace of you I hold such strife
 As 'twixt a miser and his wealth is found ;
 Now proud as an enjoyer and anon 5
 Doubting the filching age will steal his treasure,
 Now counting best to be with you alone,
 Then better'd that the world may see my pleasure :
 Sometime all full with feasting on your sight,
 And by and by clean starved for a look ; 10
 Possessing or pursuing no delight,
 Save what is had or must from you be took.
 Thus do I pine and surfeit day by day,
 Or gluttoning on all, or all away.

*

76

[*The poet's one theme.*]

Why is my verse so barren of new pride,
 So far from variation or quick change ?
 Why with the time do I not glance aside
 To new-found methods and to compounds strange ?
 Why write I still all one, ever the same, 5
 And keep invention in a notèd weed,
 That every word doth almost tell my name,
 Showing their birth and where they did proceed ?
 O know, sweet love, I always write of you,
 And you and love are still my argument ; 10
 So all my best is dressing old words new,
 Spending again what is already spent :
 For as the sun is daily new and old,
 So is my love still telling what is told.

77

[*With an album.*]

Thy glass will show thee how thy beauties wear,
 Thy dial how thy precious minutes waste ;
 The vacant leaves thy mind's imprint will bear,
 And of this book this learning mayst thou taste.
 The wrinkles which thy glass will truly show 5
 Of mouthed graves will give thee memory ;
 Thou by thy dial's shady stealth mayst know
 Time's thievish progress to eternity.
 Look, what thy memory can not contain
 Commit to these waste blanks, and thou shalt find 10
 Those children nursed, deliver'd from thy brain,
 To take a new acquaintance of thy mind.
 These offices, so oft as thou wilt look,
 Shall profit thee and much enrich thy book.

[*The poet has rivals, and one especially.*]

78

So oft have I invoked thee for my Muse
 And found such fair assistance in my verse,
 As every alien pen hath got my use
 And under thee their poesy disperse.
 Thine eyes that taught the dumb on high to sing, 5
 And heavy ignorance aloft to fly,
 Have added feathers to the learned's wing
 And given grace a double majesty.
 Yet be most proud of that which I compile,
 Whose influence is thine and born of thee : 10
 In others' works thou dost but mend the style,
 And arts with thy sweet graces graced be ;
 But thou art all my art and dost advance
 As high as learning my rude ignorance.

81

Or I shall live your epitaph to make,
Or you survive when I in earth am rotten;
From hence your memory death cannot take,
Although in me each part will be forgotten.
Your name from hence immortal life shall have,
Though I, once gone, to all the world must die :
The earth can yield me but a common grave,
When you entombed in men's eyes shall lie.
Your monument shall be my gentle verse,
Which eyes not yet created shall o'er-read ;
And tongues to be your being shall rehearse,
When all the breathers of this world are dead ;
You still shall live — such virtue hath my pen —
Where breath most breathes, even in the mouths of men.

82

I grant thou wert not married to my Muse,
And therefore mayst without attaint o'erlook
The dedicated words which writers use
Of their fair subject, blessing every book.
Thou art as fair in knowledge as in hue,
Finding thy worth a limit past my praise ;
And therefore art enforced to seek anew
Some fresher stamp of the time-bettering days.
And do so, love ; yet when they have devised
What strained touches rhetoric can lend,
Thou truly fair wert truly sympathized
In true plain words by thy true-telling friend ;
And their gross painting might be better used
Where cheeks need blood ; in thee it is abused.

83

I never saw that you did painting need,
 And therefore to your fair no painting set ;
 I found, or thought I found, you did exceed
 The barren tender of a poet's debt :
 And therefore have I slept in your report, 5
 That you yourself, being extant, well might show
 How far a modern quill doth come too short,
 Speaking of worth, what worth in you doth grow.
 This silence for my sin you did impute,
 Which shall be most my glory, being dumb; 10
 For I impair not beauty being mute,
 When others would give life and bring a tomb.
 There lives more life in one of your fair eyes
 Than both your poets can in praise devise.

84

Who is it that says most? which can say more
 Than this rich praise, that you alone are you?
 In whose confine immured is the store
 Which should example where your equal grew.
 Lean penury within that pen doth dwell 5
 That to his subject lends not some small glory;
 But he that writes of you, if he can tell
 That you are you, so dignifies his story;
 Let him but copy what in you is writ,
 Not making worse what nature made so clear, 10
 And such a counterpart shall fame his wit,
 Making his style admired everywhere.
 You to your beauteous blessings add a curse,
 Being fond on praise, which makes your praises worse.

85

My tongue-tied Muse in manners holds her still,
 While comments of your praise, richly compiled,
 Reserve their character with golden quill,
 And precious phrase by all the Muses filed.
 I think good thoughts, whilst other write good words, 5
 And like unletter'd clerk still cry 'Amen'
 To every hymn that able spirit affords
 In polish'd form of well-refined pen.
 Hearing you praised, I say ' 'Tis so, 't is true,'
 And to the most of praise add something more; 10
 But that is in my thought, whose love to you,
 Though words come hindmost, holds his rank before.
 Then others for the breath of words respect,
 Me for my dumb thoughts, speaking in effect.

86

Was it the proud full sail of his great verse,
 Bound for the prize of all-too-precious you,
 That did my ripe thoughts in my brain inhearse,
 Making their tomb the womb wherein they grew?
 Was it his spirit, by spirits taught to write 5
 Above a mortal pitch, that struck me dead?
 No, neither he, nor his compeers by night
 Giving him aid, my verse astonished.
 He, nor that affable familiar ghost
 Which nightly gulls him with intelligence, 10
 As victors of my silence cannot boast;
 I was not sick of any fear from thence:
 But when your countenance fill'd up his line,
 Then lack'd I matter; that enfeebled mine.

[*The poet appeals against the friend's estrangement.*]

87

Farewell! thou art too dear for my possessing,
 And like enough thou know'st thy estimate :
 The charter of thy worth gives thee releasing;
 My bonds in thee are all determinate.
 For how do I hold thee but by thy granting? 5
 And for that riches where is my deserving?
 The cause of this fair gift in me is wanting,
 And so my patent back again is swerving.
 Thyself thou gav'st, thy own worth then not knowing,
 Or me, to whom thou gav'st it, else mistaking; 10
 So thy great gift, upon misprision growing,
 Comes home again on better judgement making.
 Thus have I had thee, as a dream doth flatter,
 In sleep a king, but waking no such matter.

88

When thou shalt be disposed to set me light
 And place my merit in the eye of scorn,
 Upon thy side against myself I'll fight,
 And prove thee virtuous, though thou art forsworn.
 With mine own weakness being best acquainted, 5
 Upon thy part I can set down a story
 Of faults conceal'd, wherein I am attainted;
 That thou in losing me shalt win much glory:
 And I by this will be a gainer too;
 For bending all my loving thoughts on thee, 10
 The injuries that to myself I do,
 Doing thee vantage, double-vantage me.
 Such is my love, to thee I so belong,
 That for thy right myself will bear all wrong.

89

Say that thou didst forsake me for some fault,
And I will comment upon that offence :
Speak of my lameness, and I straight will halt,
Against thy reasons making no defence.
Thou canst not, love, disgrace me half so ill,
To set a form upon desired change,
As I'll myself disgrace ; knowing thy will,
I will acquaintance strangle and look strange ;
Be absent from thy walks ; and in my tongue
Thy sweet beloved name no more shall dwell,
Lest I, too much profane, should do it wrong
And haply of our old acquaintance tell.
For thee against myself I'll vow debate,
For I must ne'er love him whom thou dost hate.

90

Then hate me when thou wilt ; if ever, now ;
Now, while the world is bent my deeds to cross,
Join with the spite of fortune, make me bow,
And do not drop in for an after-loss :
Ah, do not, when my heart hath 'scaped this sorrow, 5
Come in the rearward of a conquer'd woe ;
Give not a windy night a rainy morrow,
To linger out a purposed overthrow.
If thou wilt leave me, do not leave me last,
When other petty griefs have done their spite, 10
But in the onset come: so shall I taste
At first the very worst of fortune's might,
And other strains of woe, which now seem woe,
Compared with loss of thee will not seem so.

93

So shall I live supposing thou art true,
Like a deceived husband ; so love's face
May still seem love to me, though alter'd new ;
Thy looks with me, thy heart in other place :
For there can live no hatred in thine eye, 5
Therefore in that I cannot know thy change.
In many's looks the false heart's history
Is writ in moods and frowns and wrinkles strange.
But heaven in thy creation did decree
That in thy face sweet love should ever dwell ; 10
Whate'er thy thoughts or thy heart's workings be,
Thy looks should nothing thence but sweetness tell.
How like Eve's apple doth thy beauty grow,
If thy sweet virtue answer not thy show !

[*Beauty and Vice.*]

94

They that have power to hurt and will do none,
That do not do the thing they most do show,
Who, moving others, are themselves as stone,
Unmoved, cold, and to temptation slow ;
They rightly do inherit heaven's graces 5
And husband nature's riches from expense ;
They are the lords and owners of their faces,
Others but stewards of their excellence.
The summer's flower is to the summer sweet,
Though to itself it only live and die, 10
But if that flower with base infection meet,
The basest weed outbraves his dignity :
For sweetest things turn sourest by their deeds ;
Lilies that fester smell far worse than weeds.

95

How sweet and lovely dost thou make the shame
Which, like a canker in the fragrant rose,
Doth spot the beauty of thy budding name !
O, in what sweets dost thou thy sins enclose !
That tongue that tells the story of thy days, 5
Making lascivious comments on thy sport,
Cannot dispraise but in a kind of praise ;
Naming thy name blesses an ill report.
O, what a mansion have those vices got
Which for their habitation chose out thee, 10
Where beauty's veil doth cover every blot,
And all things turns to fair that eyes can see !
Take heed, dear heart, of this large privilege ;
The hardest knife ill-used doth lose his edge.

96

Some say, thy fault is youth, some wantonness ;
Some say, thy grace is youth and gentle sport ;
Both grace and faults are loved of more and less :
Thou mak'st faults graces that to thee resort.
As on the finger of a throned queen 5
The basest jewel will be well esteem'd,
So are those errors that in thee are seen
To truths translated and for true things deem'd.
How many lambs might the stern wolf betray,
If like a lamb he could his looks translate ! 10
How many gazers mightst thou lead away,
If thou wouldst use the strength of all thy state !
But do not so ; I love thee in such sort
As thou being mine, mine is thy good report.

[*Absence in summer and spring.*]

97

How like a winter hath my absence been
From thee, the pleasure of the fleeting year !
What freezings have I felt, what dark days seen !
What old December's bareness everywhere !
And yet this time remov'd was summer's time ; 5
The teeming autumn big with rich increase,
Bearing the wanton burthen of the prime,
Like widow'd wombs after their lords' decease :
Yet this abundant issue seem'd to me
But hope of orphans and unfather'd fruit ; 10
For summer and his pleasures wait on thee,
And, thou away, the very birds are mute ;
Or, if they sing, 't is with so dull a cheer
That leaves look pale, dreading the winter 's near.

98

From you have I been absent in the spring,
When proud-pied April, dress'd in all his trim,
Hath put a spirit of youth in every thing,
That heavy Saturn laugh'd and leap'd with him.
Yet nor the lays of birds nor the sweet smell 5
Of different flowers in odour and in hue
Could make me any summer's story tell,
Or from their proud lap pluck them where they grew :
Nor did I wonder at the lily's white,
Nor praise the deep vermilion in the rose ; 10
They were but sweet, but figures of delight,
Drawn after you, you pattern of all those.
Yet seem'd it winter still, and, you away,
As with your shadow I with these did play :

99

The forward violet thus did I chide :
 Sweet thief, whence didst thou steal thy sweet that smells,
 If not from my love's breath? The purple pride
 Which on thy soft cheek for complexion dwells
 In my love's veins thou hast too grossly dyed. 5
 The lily I condemned for thy hand,
 And buds of marjoram had stol'n thy hair ;
 The roses fearfully on thorns did stand,
 One blushing shame, another white despair ;
 A third, nor red nor white, had stol'n of both 10
 And to his robbery had annex'd thy breath ;
 But, for his theft, in pride of all his growth
 A vengeful canker eat him up to death.
 More flowers I noted, yet I none could see
 But sweet or colour it had stol'n from thee. 15

[An interval of time.]

[*Apology for silence.*]

100

Where art thou, Muse, that thou forget'st so long
 To speak of that which gives thee all thy might ?
 Spend'st thou thy fury on some worthless song,
 Darkening thy power, to lend base subjects light ?
 Return, forgetful Muse, and straight redeem 5
 In gentle numbers time so idly spent ;
 Sing to the ear that doth thy lays esteem
 And gives thy pen both skill and argument.
 Rise, resty Muse, my love's sweet face survey,
 If Time have any wrinkle graven there ; 10
 If any, be a satire to decay,
 And make Time's spoils despised everywhere.

Give my love fame faster than Time wastes life ;
 So thou prevent'st his scythe and crooked knife.

101

O truant Muse, what shall be thy amends
 For thy neglect of truth in beauty dyed?
 Both truth and beauty on my love depends;
 So dost thou too, and therein dignified.
 Make answer, Muse: wilt thou not haply say 5
 'Truth needs no colour, with his colour fix'd;
 Beauty no pencil, beauty's truth to lay;
 But best is best, if never intermix'd'?
 Because he needs no praise, wilt thou be dumb?
 Excuse not silence so, for 't lies in thee 10
 To make him much outlive a gilded tomb,
 And to be praised of ages yet to be.
 Then do thy office, Muse; I teach thee how
 To make him seem long hence as he shows now.

102

My love is strengthen'd, though more weak in seeming;
 I love not less, though less the show appear:
 That love is merchandized whose rich esteeming
 The owner's tongue doth publish everywhere.
 Our love was new, and then but in the spring 5
 When I was wont to greet it with my lays;
 As Philomel in summer's front doth sing,
 And stops her pipe in growth of riper days:
 Not that the summer is less pleasant now
 Than when her mournful hymns did hush the night, 10
 But that wild music burthens every bough,
 And sweets grown common lose their dear delight.
 Therefore, like her, I sometime hold my tongue,
 Because I would not dull you with my song.

103

Alack, what poverty my Muse brings forth,
 That having such a scope to show her pride,
 The argument, all bare, is of more worth
 Than when it hath my added praise beside!
 O, blame me not, if I no more can write! 5
 Look in your glass, and there appears a face
 That over-goes my blunt invention quite,
 Dulling my lines and doing me disgrace.
 Were it not sinful, then, striving to mend,
 To mar the subject that before was well? 10
 For to no other pass my verses tend
 Than of your graces and your gifts to tell;
 And more, much more, than in my verse can sit
 Your own glass shows you when you look in it.

*[The friend's beauty and the poet's love, which are the argument
 of his verse, remain unchanged.]*

104

To me, fair friend, you never can be old,
 For as you were when first your eye I eyed,
 Such seems your beauty still. Three winters cold
 Have from the forests shook three summers' pride,
 Three beauteous springs to yellow autumn turn'd 5
 In process of the seasons have I seen,
 Three April perfumes in three hot Junes burn'd,
 Since first I saw you fresh, which yet are green.
 Ah, yet doth beauty, like a dial-hand,
 Steal from his figure and no pace perceived; 10
 So your sweet hue, which methinks still doth stand,
 Hath motion and mine eye may be deceived:
 For fear of which, hear this, thou age unbred;
 Ere you were born was beauty's summer dead.

105

Let not my love be call'd idolatry,
Nor my beloved as an idol show,
Since all alike my songs and praises be
To one, of one, still such, and ever so.
Kind is my love to-day, to-morrow kind, 5
Still constant in a wondrous excellence ;
Therefore my verse to constancy confined,
One thing expressing, leaves out difference.
'Fair, kind, and true' is all my argument,
'Fair, kind, and true' varying to other words ; 10
And in this change is my invention spent,
Three themes in one, which wondrous scope affords.
'Fair,' 'kind,' and 'true,' have often lived alone,
Which three till now never kept seat in one.

106

When in the chronicle of wasted time
I see descriptions of the fairest wights,
And beauty making beautiful old rime
In praise of ladies dead and lovely knights,
Then, in the blazon of sweet beauty's best, 5
Of hand, of foot, of lip, of eye, of brow,
I see their antique pen would have express'd
Even such a beauty as you master now.
So all their praises are but prophecies
Of this our time, all you prefiguring ; 10
And, for they look'd but with divining eyes,
They had not skill enough your worth to sing :
For we, which now behold these present days,
Have eyes to wonder, but lack tongues to praise.

107

Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
 Of the wide world dreaming on things to come,
 Can yet the lease of my true love control,
 Supposed as forfeit to a confin'd doom.
 The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured, 5
 And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
 Incertainties now crown themselves assured
 And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
 Now with the drops of this most balmy time
 My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes, 10
 Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rime,
 While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes :
 And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
 When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent.

108

What's in the brain that ink may character
 Which hath not figured to thee my true spirit?
 What's new to speak, what new to register,
 That may express my love or thy dear merit?
 Nothing, sweet boy; but yet, like prayers divine, 5
 I must each day say o'er the very same,
 Counting no old thing old, thou mine, I thine,
 Even as when first I hallow'd thy fair name.
 So that eternal love in love's fresh case
 Weighs not the dust and injury of age, 10
 Nor gives to necessary wrinkles place,
 But makes antiquity for aye his page;
 Finding the first conceit of love there bred
 Where time and outward form would show it dead.

[*Apology for apparent faithlessness during the long separation.*]

109

O, never say that I was false of heart,
 Though absence seem'd my flame to qualify.
 As easy might I from myself depart
 As from my soul, which in thy breast doth lie:
 That is my home of love: if I have ranged, 5
 Like him that travels I return again,
 Just to the time, not with the time exchanged,
 So that myself bring water for my stain.
 Never believe, though in my nature reign'd
 All frailties that besiege all kinds of blood, 10
 That it could so preposterously be stain'd,
 To leave for nothing all thy sum of good;
 For nothing this wide universe I call,
 Save thou, my rose; in it thou art my all.

110

Alas, 't is true I have gone here and there
 And made myself a motley to the view,
 Gored mine own thoughts, sold cheap what is most dear,
 Made old offences of affections new;
 Most true it is that I have look'd on truth 5
 Askance and strangely: but, by all above,
 These blenches gave my heart another youth,
 And worse essays proved thee my best of love.
 Now all is done, have what shall have no end:
 Mine appetite I never more will grind 10
 On newer proof, to try an older friend,
 A god in love, to whom I am confined.
 Then give me welcome, next my heaven the best,
 Even to thy pure and most most loving breast.

III

O, for my sake do you with Fortune chide,
The guilty goddess of my harmful deeds,
That did not better for my life provide
Than public means which public manners breeds.
Thence comes it that my name receives a brand; 5
And almost thence my nature is subdued
To what it works in, like the dyer's hand:
Pity me then and wish I were renew'd;
Whilst, like a willing patient, I will drink
Potions of eisel 'gainst my strong infection; 10
No bitterness that I will bitter think,
Nor double penance, to correct correction.
 Pity me then, dear friend, and I assure ye
 Even that your pity is enough to cure me.

III 2

Your love and pity doth the impression fill
Which vulgar scandal stamp'd upon my brow;
For what care I who calls me well or ill,
So you o'er-green my bad, my good allow?
You are my all-the-world, and I must strive 5
To know my shames and praises from your tongue;
None else to me, nor I to none alive,
That my steel'd sense or changes right or wrong.
In so profound abysm I throw all care
Of others' voices, that my adder's sense 10
To critic and to flatterer stopped are.
Mark how with my neglect I do dispense:
 You are so strongly in my purpose bred
 That all the world besides methinks are dead.

113

Since I left you, mine eye is in my mind,
And that which governs me to go about
Doth part his function and is partly blind,
Seems seeing, but effectually is out ;
For it no form delivers to the heart 5
Of bird, of flower, or shape, which it doth latch :
Of his quick objects hath the mind no part,
Nor his own vision holds what it doth catch ;
For if it see the rud'st or gentlest sight,
The most sweet favour or deformed'st creature, 10
The mountain or the sea, the day or night,
The crow or dove, it shapes them to your feature :
Incapable of more, replete with you,
My most true mind thus maketh mine untrue.

114

Or whether doth my mind, being crown'd with you,
Drink up the monarch's plague, this flattery ?
Or whether shall I say, mine eye saith true,
And that your love taught it this alchemy,
To make of monsters and things indigest 5
Such cherubins as your sweet self resemble,
Creating every bad a perfect best,
As fast as objects to his beams assemble ?
O, 't is the first ; 't is flattery in my seeing,
And my great mind most kingly drinks it up : 10
Mine eye well knows what with his gust is 'greeing,
And to his palate doth prepare the cup :
If it be poison'd, 't is the lesser sin
That mine eye loves it and doth first begin.

115

Those lines that I before have writ do lie,
Even those that said I could not love you dearer :
Yet then my judgement knew no reason why
My most full flame should afterwards burn clearer.
But reckoning Time, whose million'd accidents 5
Creep in 'twixt vows and change decrees of kings,
Tan sacred beauty, blunt the sharp'st intents,
Divert strong minds to the course of altering things :—
Alas, why, fearing of Time's tyranny,
Might I not then say ' Now I love you best,' 10
When I was certain o'er incertainty,
Crowning the present, doubting of the rest ?
Love is a babe ; then might I *not* say so,
To give full growth to that which still doth grow.

116

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
Admit impediments. Love is not love
Which alters when it alteration finds,
Or bends with the remover to remove :
O, no ! it is an ever-fixed mark, 5
That looks on tempests and is never shaken ;
It is the star to every wandering bark,
Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.
Love's not Time's fool, though rosy lips and cheeks 10
Within his bending sickle's compass come ;
Love alters not with his brief hours and weeks,
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.
If this be error and upon me proved,
I never writ, nor no man ever loved.

117

Accuse me thus : that I have scanted all
Wherein I should your great deserts repay ;
Forgot upon your dearest love to call,
Whereto all bonds do tie me day by day ;
That I have frequent been with unknown minds, 5
And given to time your own dear-purchased right ;
That I have hoisted sail to all the winds
Which should transport me farthest from your sight.
Book both my wilfulness and errors down,
And on just proof surmise accumulate ; 10
Bring me within the level of your frown,
But shoot not at me in your waken'd hate ;
 Since my appeal says I did strive to prove
 The constancy and virtue of your love.

118

Like as, to make our appetites more keen,
With eager compounds we our palate urge ;
As, to prevent our maladies unseen,
We sicken to shun sickness when we purge,
Even so, being full of your ne'er-cloying sweetness, 5
To bitter sauces did I frame my feeding ;
And, sick of welfare, found a kind of meetness
To be diseased ere that there was true needing.
Thus policy in love, to anticipate
The ills that were not, grew to faults assured, 10
And brought to medicine a healthful state
Which, rank of goodness, would by ill be cured :
 But thence I learn, and find the lesson true,
 Drugs poison him that so fell sick of you.

119

What potions have I drunk of Siren tears,
 Distill'd from limbecks foul as hell within,
 Applying fears to hopes and hopes to fears,
 Still losing when I saw myself to win !
 What wretched errors hath my heart committed, 5
 Whilst it hath thought itself so blessed never !
 How have mine eyes out of their spheres been fitted
 In the distraction of this madding fever !
 O benefit of ill ! now I find true
 That better is by evil still made better ; 10
 And ruin'd love, when it is built anew,
 Grows fairer than at first, more strong, far greater.
 So I return rebuked to my content,
 And gain by ills thrice more than I have spent.

120

That you were once unkind befriends me now,
 And for that sorrow which I then did feel
 Needs must I under my transgression bow,
 Unless my nerves were brass or hammer'd steel.
 For if you were by my unkindness shaken, 5
 As I by yours, you 've pass'd a hell 'of time ;
 And I, a tyrant, have no leisure taken
 To weigh how once I suffer'd in your crime.
 † O, that our night of woe might have remember'd
 My deepest sense, how hard true sorrow hits, 10
 And soon to you, as you to me then, tender'd
 The humble salve which wounded bosoms fits !
 But that your trespass now becomes a fee ;
 Mine ransoms yours, and yours must ransom me.

121

'T is better to be vile than vile esteem'd,
When not to be receives reproach of being ;
And the just pleasure lost which is so deem'd
Not by our feeling, but by others' seeing :
For why should others' false adulterate eyes
Give salutation to my sportive blood ?
Or on my frailties why are frailer spies,
Which in their wills count bad what I think good ?
No, I am that I am, and they that level
At my abuses reckon up their own :
I may be straight, though they themselves be bevel ;
By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown ;
Unless this general evil they maintain,
All men are bad, and in their badness reign.

122

Thy gift, thy tables, are within my brain
Full character'd with lasting memory,
Which shall above that idle rank remain
Beyond all date, even to eternity;
Or at the least, so long as brain and heart
Have faculty by nature to subsist;
Till each to razed oblivion yield his part
Of thee, thy record never can be miss'd.
That poor retention could not so much hold,
Nor need I tallies thy dear love to score;
Therefore to give them from me was I bold,
To trust those tables that receive thee more:
To keep an adjunct to remember thee
Were to import forgetfulness in me.

123

No, Time, thou shalt not boast that I do change:
 Thy pyramids built up with newer might
 To me are nothing novel, nothing strange;
 They are but dressings of a former sight.
 Our dates are brief, and therefore we admire 5
 What thou dost foist upon us that is old;
 And rather make them born to our desire
 Than think that we before have heard them told.
 Thy registers and thee I both defy,
 Not wondering at the present nor the past, 10
 For thy records and what we see doth lie,
 Made more or less by thy continual haste.
 This I do vow and this shall ever be;
 I will be true, despite thy scythe and thee.

124

If my dear love were but the child of state,
 It might for Fortune's bastard be unfather'd,
 As subject to Time's love or to Time's hate,
 Weeds among weeds, or flowers with flowers gather'd.
 No, it was builded far from accident; 5
 It suffers not in smiling pomp, nor falls
 Under the blow of thrall'd discontent,
 Whereto the inviting time our fashion calls:
 It fears not policy, that heretic,
 Which works on leases of short-number'd hours, 10
 But all alone stands hugely politic,
 † That it nor grows with heat nor drowns with showers.
 To this I witness call the fools of time,
 Which die for goodness, who have lived for crime.

125

Were 't aught to me I bore the canopy,
 With my extern the outward honouring,
 Or laid great bases for eternity,
 Which prove more short than waste or ruining?
 Have I not seen dwellers on form and favour 5
 Lose all, and more, by paying too much rent,
 For compound sweet forgoing simple savour,
 Pitiful thrivers, in their gazing spent?
 No, let me be obsequious in thy heart,
 And take thou my oblation, poor but free, 10
 Which is not mix'd with seconds, knows no art,
 But mutual render, only me for thee.

Hence, thou suborn'd informer! a true soul
 When most impeach'd stands least in thy control.

126

[*Envoi.*]

O thou, my lovely boy, who in thy power
 Dost hold Time's fickle glass, his sickle-hour;
 Who hast by waning grown, and therein show'st
 Thy lovers withering as thy sweet self grow'st;
 If Nature, sovereign mistress over wrack, 5
 As thou goest onwards, still will pluck thee back,
 She keeps thee to this purpose, that her skill
 May time disgrace and wretched minutes kill.
 Yet fear her, O thou minion of her pleasure!
 She may detain, but not still keep, her treasure: 10
 Her audit, though delay'd, answer'd must be,
 And her quietus is to render thee.

[APPENDIX OF SONNETS FOR THE MOST PART
WRITTEN TO OR ABOUT A DARK LADY]

127

[*The praise of dark beauty.*]

In the old age black was not counted fair,
Or if it were, it bore not beauty's name ;
But now is black beauty's successive heir,
And beauty slander'd with a bastard shame :
For since each hand hath put on nature's power, 5
Fairing the foul with art's false borrow'd face,
Sweet beauty hath no name, no holy bower,
But is profaned, if not lives in disgrace.
Therefore my mistress' brows are raven black,
Her eyes so suited, and they mourners seem 10
At such who, not born fair, no beauty lack,
Slandering creation with a false esteem :
 Yet so they mourn, becoming of their woe,
 That every tongue says beauty should look so.

128

[*At the virginals.*]

How oft, when thou, my music, music play'st,
Upon that blessed wood whose motion sounds
With thy sweet fingers, when thou gently sway'st
The wiry concord that mine ear confounds,
Do I envÿ those jacks that nimble leap 5
To kiss the tender inward of thy hand,
Whilst my poor lips, which should that harvest reap,
At the wood's boldness by thee blushing stand !

To be so tickled, they would change their state
 And situation with those dancing chips, 10
 O'er whom thy fingers walk with gentle gait,
 Making dead wood more blest than living lips.
 Since saucy jacks so happy are in this,
 Give them thy fingers, me thy lips to kiss.

129

[*The lust of the flesh.*]

The expense of spirit in a waste of shame
 Is lust in action ; and till action, lust
 Is perjured, murderous, bloody, full of blame,
 Savage, extreme, rude, cruel, not to trust ;
 Enjoy'd no sooner but despised straight ; 5
 Past reason hunted, and no sooner had,
 Past reason hated, as a swallow'd bait
 On purpose laid to make the taker mad :
 Mad in pursuit and in possession so ;
 Had, having, and in quest to have, extreme ; 10
 A bliss in proof, and proved, a very woe ;
 Before a joy proposed ; behind a dream.
 All this the world well knows ; yet none knows well
 To shun the heaven that leads men to this hell.

130

[*A jesting sonnet.*]

My mistress' eyes are nothing like the sun ;
 Coral is far more red than her lips' red :
 If snow be white, why then her breasts are dun ;
 If hairs be wires, black wires grow on her head.
 I have seen roses damask'd, red and white, 5
 But no such roses see I in her cheeks ;

And in some perfumes is there more delight
 Than in the breath that from my mistress reeks.
 I love to hear her speak, yet well I know
 That music hath a far more pleasing sound : 10
 I grant I never saw a goddess go ;
 My mistress, when she walks, treads on the ground :
 And yet, by heaven, I think my love as rare
 As any she belied with false compare.

[*Black beauty*]

131

Thou art as tyrannous, so as thou art,
 As those whose beauties proudly make them cruel ;
 For well thou know'st to my dear dotting heart
 Thou art the fairest and most precious jewel.
 Yet in good faith some say that thee behold 5
 Thy face hath not the power to make love groan :
 To say they err I dare not be so bold,
 Although I swear it to myself alone.
 And, to be sure that is not false I swear,
 A thousand groans, but thinking on thy face, 10
 One on another's neck, do witness bear
 Thy black is fairest in my judgement's place.
 In nothing art thou black save in thy deeds,
 And thence this slander, as I think, proceeds.

132

Thine eyes I love, and they, as pitying me,
 Knowing thy heart torments me with disdain,
 Have put on black and loving mourners be,
 Looking with pretty ruth upon my pain.
 And truly not the morning sun of heaven 5
 Better becomes the grey cheeks of the east,

Nor that full star that ushers in the even
Doth half that glory to the sober west,
As those two mourning eyes become thy face :
O, let it then as well beseem thy heart 10
To mourn for me, since mourning doth thee grace,
And suit thy pity like in every part.
Then will I swear Beauty herself is black
And all they foul that thy complexion lack.

[*The captive 'Wills.'*]

133

Beshrew that heart that makes my heart to groan
For that deep wound it gives my friend and me !
Is 't not enough to torture me alone,
But slave to slavery my sweet'st friend must be?
Me from myself thy cruel eye hath taken, 5
And my next self thou harder hast engross'd :
Of him, myself, and thee, I am forsaken ;
A torment thrice threefold thus to be cross'd.
Prison my heart in thy steel bosom's ward,
But then my friend's heart let my poor heart bail ; 10
Whoe'er keeps me, let my heart be his guard ;
Thou canst not then use rigour in my gaol :
And yet thou wilt ; for I, being pent in thee,
Perforce am thine, and all that is in me.

134

So, now I have confess'd that he is thine
And I myself am mortgaged to thy will,
Myself I'll forfeit, so that other mine
Thou wilt restore, to be my comfort still :
But thou wilt not, nor he will not be free, 5
For thou art covetous and he is kind ;

He learn'd but surety-like to write for me,
 Under that bond that him as fast doth bind.
 The statute of thy beauty thou wilt take,
 Thou usurer, that put'st forth all to use, 10
 And sue a friend came debtor for my sake ;
 So him I lose through my unkind abuse.
 Him have I lost ; thou hast both him and me :
 He pays the whole, and yet am I not free.

135

Whoever hath her wish, thou hast thy will,
 And 'Will' to boot, and 'Will' in overplus ;
 More than enough am I that vex thee still,
 To thy sweet will making addition thus.
 Wilt thou, whose will is large and spacious, 5
 Not once vouchsafe to hide my will in thine ?
 Shall will in others seem right gracious,
 And in my will no fair acceptance shine ?
 The sea, all water, yet receives rain still
 And in abundance addeth to his store ; 10
 So thou, being rich in will, add to thy will
 One will of mine, to make thy large will more.
 Let no unkind no fair beseechers kill ;
 Think all but one, and me in that one 'Will.'

136

If thy soul check thee that I come so near,
 Swear to thy blind soul that I was thy 'Will,'
 And will, thy soul knows, is admitted there ;
 Thus far for love my love-suit, sweet, fulfil.
 Will will fulfil the treasure of thy love, 5
 Ay, fill it full with wills, and my will one.
 In things of great receipt with ease we prove

Among a number one is reckon'd none :
Then in the number let me pass untold,
Though in thy store's account I one must be ; 10
For nothing hold me, so it please thee hold
That nothing me, a something, sweet, to thee :
 Make but my name thy love, and love that still,
 And then thou lov'st me, for my name is 'Will.'

[*The poet dotes upon the dark lady, knowing her to be neither
fair nor kind nor true.*]

137

Thou blind fool, Love, what dost thou to mine eyes,
That they behold, and see not what they see ?
They know what beauty is, see where it lies,
Yet what the best is take the worst to be.
If eyes corrupt by over-partial looks 5
Be anchor'd in the bay where all men ride,
Why of eyes' falsehood hast thou forged hooks,
Whereto the judgement of my heart is tied ?
Why should my heart think that a several plot
Which my heart knows the wide world's common place ? 10
Or mine eyes seeing this, say this is not,
To put fair truth upon so foul a face ?
 In things right true my heart and eyes have erred,
 And to this false plague are they now transferr'd.

138

When my love swears that she is made of truth
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth,
Unlearned in the world's false subtleties.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young, 5
Although she knows my days are past the best,

Simply I credit her false-speaking tongue:
 On both sides thus is simple truth suppress'd.
 But wherefore says she not she is unjust?
 And wherefore say not I that I am old? 10
 O, love's best habit is in seeming trust,
 And age in love loves not to have years told:
 Therefore I lie with her and she with me,
 And in our faults by lies we flatter'd be.

139

O, call not me to justify the wrong
 That thy unkindness lays upon my heart;
 Wound me not with thine eye but with thy tongue;
 Use power with power and slay me not by art.
 Tell me thou lov'st elsewhere; but in my sight, 5
 Dear heart, forbear to glance thine eye aside:
 What need'st thou wound with cunning when thy might
 Is more than my o'er-press'd defence can bide?
 Let me excuse thee: ah! my love well knows
 Her pretty looks have been mine enemies, 10
 And therefore from my face she turns my foes,
 That they elsewhere might dart their injuries:
 Yet do not so; but since I am near slain,
 Kill me outright with looks and rid my pain.

140

Be wise as thou art cruel; do not press
 My tongue-tied patience with too much disdain;
 Lest sorrow lend me words and words express
 The manner of my pity-wanting pain.
 If I might teach thee wit, better it were, 5
 Though not to love, yet, love, to tell me so;
 As testy sick men, when their deaths be near,

No news but health from their physicians know ;
For if I should despair, I should grow mad,
And in my madness might speak ill of thee : 10
Now this ill-wresting world is grown so bad,
Mad slanderers by mad ears believed be.

That I may not be so, nor thou belied,
Bear thine eyes straight, though thy proud heart go
wide.

141

In faith, I do not love thee with mine eyes,
For they in thee a thousand errors note ;
But 't is my heart that loves what they despise,
Who in despite of view is pleased to dote ;
Nor are mine ears with thy tongue's tune delighted ; 5
Nor tender feeling to base touches prone,
Nor taste, nor smell, desire to be invited
To any sensual feast with thee alone :
But my five wits nor my five senses can
Dissuade one foolish heart from serving thee, 10
Who leaves unsway'd the likeness of a man,
Thy proud heart's slave and vassal wretch to be :
Only my plague thus far I count my gain,
That she that makes me sin awards me pain.

142

Love is my sin and thy dear virtue hate,
Hate of my sin, grounded on sinful loving :
O, but with mine compare thou thine own state,
And thou shalt find it merits not reproving ;
Or, if it do, not from those lips of thine, 5
That have profaned their scarlet ornaments
And seal'd false bonds of love as oft as mine,
Robb'd others' beds' revénues of their rents.

Be it lawful I love thee, as thou lov'st those
 Whom thine eyes woo as mine impórtune thee : 10
 Root pity in thy heart, that when it grows
 Thy pity may deserve to pitied be.
 If thou dost seek to have what thou dost hide,
 By self-example mayst thou be denied !

143

Lo! as a careful huswife runs to catch
 One of her feather'd creatures broke away,
 Sets down her babe, and makes all swift dispatch
 In púrsuit of the thing she would have stay;
 Whilst her neglected child holds her in chase, 5
 Cries to catch her whose busy care is bent
 To follow that which flies before her face,
 Not prizing her poor infant's discontent :
 So runn'st thou after that which flies from thee,
 Whilst I thy babe chase thee afar behind; 10
 But if thou catch thy hope, turn back to me,
 And play the mother's part, kiss me, be kind:
 So will I pray that thou mayst have thy 'Will,'
 If thou turn back, and my loud crying still.

144

[*Two spirits of love.*]

Two loves I have, of comfort and despair,
 Which like two spirits do suggest me still :
 The better angel is a man right fair,
 The worser spirit a woman colour'd ill.
 To win me soon to hell, my female evil 5
 Tempteth my better angel from my side,
 And would corrupt my saint to be a devil,
 Wooing his purity with her foul pride.

And whether that my angel be turn'd fiend
 Suspect I may, yet not directly tell; 10
 But being both from me, both to each friend,
 I guess one angel in another's hell:
 Yet this shall I ne'er know, but live in doubt,
 Till my bad angel fire my good one out.

145

[*A lover's plesantry.*]

Those lips that Love's own hand did make
 Breathed forth the sound that said 'I hate'
 To me that languish'd for her sake;
 But when she saw my woeful state,
 Straight in her heart did mercy come, 5
 Chiding that tongue that ever sweet
 Was used in giving gentle doom,
 And taught it thus anew to greet;
 'I hate' she alter'd with an end,
 That follow'd it as gentle day 10
 Doth follow night, who like a fiend
 From heaven to hell is flown away;
 'I hate' from hate away she threw,
 And saved my life, saying 'not you.'

146

[*Soul and Body.*]

Poor soul, the centre of my sinful earth,
 † . . . these rebel powers that thee array,
 Why dost thou pine within and suffer dearth,
 Painting thy outward walls so costly gay?
 Why so large cost, having so short a lease, 5
 Dost thou upon thy fading mansion spend?
 Shall worms, inheritors of this excess,

Eat up thy charge? is this thy body's end?
 Then, soul, live thou upon thy servant's loss,
 And let that pine to aggravate thy store ; 10
 Buy terms divine in selling hours of dross ;
 Within be fed, without be rich no more :
 So shalt thou feed on Death, that feeds on men,
 And Death once dead, there 's no more dying then.

[The poet's mad love for the dark lady further described.]

(147

My love is as a fever, longing still
 For that which longer nurseth the disease ;
 Feeding on that which doth preserve the ill,
 The uncertain sickly appetite to please.
 My reason, the physician to my love, 5
 Angry that his prescriptions are not kept,
 Hath left me, and I desperate now approve
 Desire is death, which physic did except.
 Past cure I am, now reason is past care,
 And frantic-mad with evermore unrest ; 10
 My thoughts and my discourse as madmen's are,
 At random from the truth vainly express'd ;
 For I have sworn thee fair, and thought thee bright,
 Who art as black as hell, as dark as night.

148

O me, what eyes hath Love put in my head,
 Which have no correspondence with true sight !
 Or, if they have, where is my judgement fled,
 That censures falsely what they see aright ?
 If that be fair whereon my false eyes dote, 5
 What means the world to say it is not so ?
 If it be not, then love doth well denote

Love's eye is not so true as all men's : No,
How can it ? O, how can Love's eye be true,
That is so vex'd with watching and with tears ? 10
No marvel then, though I mistake my view ;
The sun itself sees not till heaven clears.

O cunning Love ! with tears thou keep'st me blind,
Lest eyes well-seeing thy foul faults should find.

149

Canst thou, O cruel ! say I love thee not,
When I against myself with thee partake ?
Do I not think on thee, when I forgot
Am of myself, all-tyrant, for thy sake ?
Who hateth thee that I do call my friend ? 5
On whom frown'st thou that I do fawn upon ?
Nay, if thou lour'st on me, do I not spend
Revenge upon myself with present moan ?
What merit do I in myself respect,
That is so proud thy service to despise, 10
When all my best doth worship thy defect,
Commanded by the motion of thine eyes ?

But, love, hate on, for now I know thy mind ;
Those that can see thou lov'st, and I am blind.

150

O, from what power hast thou this powerful might
With insufficiency my heart to sway ?
To make me give the lie to my true sight,
And swear that brightness doth not grace the day ?
Whence hast thou this becoming of things ill, 5
That in the very refuse of thy deeds
There is such strength and warrantise of skill
That, in my mind, thy worst all best exceeds ?

Who taught thee how to make me love thee more
 The more I hear and see just cause of hate? 10
 O, though I love what others do abhor,
 With others thou shouldst not abhor my state:
 If thy unworthiness raised love in me,
 More worthy I to be beloved of thee.

151

Love is too young to know what conscience is;
 Yet who knows not conscience is born of love?
 Then, gentle cheater, urge not my amiss,
 Lest guilty of my faults thy sweet self prove:
 For, thou betraying me, I do betray 5
 My nobler part to my gross body's treason;
 My soul doth tell my body that he may
 Triumph in love; flesh stays no farther reason,
 But, rising at thy name, doth point out thee
 As his triumphant prize. Proud of this pride, 10
 He is contented thy poor drudge to be,
 To stand in thy affairs, fall by thy side.
 No want of conscience hold it that I call
 Her 'love' for whose dear love I rise and fall.

152

In loving thee thou know'st I am forsworn,
 But thou art twice forsworn, to me love swearing;
 In act thy bed-vow broke and new faith torn
 In vowing new hate after new love bearing.
 But why of two oaths' breach do I accuse thee, 5
 When I break twenty? I am perjured most;
 For all my vows are oaths but to misuse thee,
 And all my honest faith in thee is lost:
 For I have sworn deep oaths of thy deep kindness,

Oaths of thy love, thy truth, thy constancy ; 10
And, to enlighten thee, gave eyes to blindness,
Or made them swear against the thing they see ;
For I have sworn thee fair; more perjured I,
To swear against the truth so foul a lie !

[*Two epigrams on Cupid.*]

153

Cupid laid by his brand, and fell asleep :
A maid of Dian's this advantage found,
And his love-kindling fire did quickly steep
In a cold valley-fountain of that ground ;
Which borrow'd from this holy fire of Love 5
A dateless lively heat, still to endure,
And grew a seething bath, which yet men prove
Against strange maladies a sovereign cure.
But at my mistress' eye Love's brand new-fired,
The boy for trial needs would touch my breast ; 10
I, sick withal, the help of bath desired,
And thither hied, a sad distemper'd guest,
But found no cure : the bath for my help lies
Where Cupid got new fire — my mistress' eyes.

154

The little Love-god lying once asleep
Laid by his side his heart-inflaming brand,
Whilst many nymphs that vow'd chaste life to keep
Came tripping by ; but in her maiden hand
The fairest votary took up that fire 5
Which many legions of true hearts had warm'd ;
And so the general of hot desire
Was sleeping by a virgin hand disarm'd.

This brand she quenched in a cool well by,
Which from Love's fire took heat perpetual, 10
Growing a bath and healthful remedy
For men diseased; but I, my mistress' thrall,
Came there for cure, and this by that I prove,
Love's fire heats water, water cools not love.

NOTES

To economise space the commentators most frequently quoted have been referred to by initials. Thus M., S., and C. stand for Malone, Steevens, and Capell, who are cited from the Variorum Edition of 1821; D. represents Professor Dowden, whose edition of the Sonnets, first published in 1875, has been reissued with additional matter (Kegan Paul, 1903) as this book is passing the press; H. is Professor Herford, editor of the Eversley edition of Shakespeare (Macmillan); B. is the late Mr. Samuel Butler, who published an edition of the Sonnets in 1899 (Longmans); and W. is the Right Honourable George Wyndham, who edited all the Poems in 1898 (Methuen). Other editors are cited by their full names. Q. represents the Quarto of 1609, the title-page of which is as follows: SHAKESPEARES | SONNETS | Neuer before Imprinted. | AT LONDON | By G. Eld for T. T. and are | to be folde by *John Wright*, dwelling | at Christ Church gate | 1609. | In some copies: to be folde by William Aspley.

The T. T. of the title-page and dedication is identified by the following reference in the Stationers' Register, under date 29 Maij, 1609: "Thomas Thorpe Entred for his copie vnder thandes of master Wilson and master Lownes Warden a Booke called Shakespeares sonnettes vj⁴."

1 1. It was pointed out by Massey (*Secret Drama of Shakespeare's Sonnets*, p. 72) that the first seventeen sonnets owe certain arguments and expressions to Sidney's *Arcadia*, III, 5 (see the passage quoted on 5. 10). It is interesting also to notice that marriage was urged on Sidney himself by his friend Languet. See 13. 14, note.

5. **contracted**, betrothed. A reference to the fable of Narcissus, who fell in love with his own reflection.

6. **self-substantial fuel**, fuel which is thine own substance. "You feed your sight on the sight of yourself" (W.).

10. **herald**, the first bright flower of a new spring. The idea of the third quatrain seems to be that W. H. might, if he pleased, enrich the world with a more beautiful race of mortals.

11. **content**, satisfaction. To "bury one's content in oneself" is to have no desires outside.

12. **mak'st waste in niggarding**. For the oxymoron applied to the single life, cf. *Romeo and Juliet*, I, i, 223:

Ben. Then she hath sworn that she will still live chaste?

Rom. She hath, and in that *sparing* makes huge *waste*.

13, 14. "Pity the world which is daily depopulated by the grave, and beget children in order to supply the loss; or, if you do not fulfil this duty, acknowledge that as a glutton swallows and consumes more than is sufficient for his own support, so you (who by the course of nature must die, and by your own remissness are likely to die childless) consume and destroy *the world's due*; to the desolation of which you will doubly contribute; 1. by thy death; 2. by thy dying childless" (M.).

2 4. weed, garment; as in 76. 6.

8. "Such gluttony would be a shame, and such self-praise could not profit."

9. deserved, would deserve.

11. "shall stand for the whole treasure of beauty committed to me (being indeed my own), and so make excuse for my age."

3 3. repair, good condition (strictly, restoration to that state). So we speak of a house as being in good *repair*. Compare *King John*, III, iv, 113: "Even in the instant of repair and health."

5. unear'd, untill'd.

9. mother's. This word affords no ground for the supposition (D.) that W. H.'s father was dead. The fact may simply have been that he resembled his mother. "For the idea, cf. *Rape of Lucrece* (1758), where Lucretius, speaking to his dead daughter, says,

Poor broken glass, I often did behold
In thy sweet semblance my old age new-born" (M.).

13. "If you exist only for the sake of being forgotten."

4 1. Beauty is a loan bequeathed by nature under condition that it should be used, not hoarded. In line 7 the condition is further defined: the loan is to be lent at interest.

4. free, frank, liberal. "Milton has imitated this sonnet in *Comus* :

"Why should you be so cruel to yourself
And to those dainty limbs which *Nature lent*
For gentle usage and soft delicacy?
But you invert the covenants of her trust,
And harshly deal, like an ill borrower,
With that which you received on other terms" (S.).

9. A usurer who lent money only to himself could not live on the proceeds of his trade.

5 2. gaze. Used of the object gazed at; also in *Macbeth*, V, viii, 24: "live to be the show and gaze o' the time."

4. unfair, deprive of beauty. Used only in this place.

9. *summer's distillation*. So 54. 11. This is a thought with which Shakespeare seems to have been much pleased. "We find it again in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, I, i, 76:

"Earthlier happy is the *rose distilled*
Than that which withering on the virgin thorn
Grows, lives, and dies in single blessedness" (M.).

10. Cf. *Arcadia*, III, 5: "Have you ever seen a pure rose-water kept in a crystal glass? How fine it looks! how sweet it smells while that beautiful *glass imprisons* it." The expression here seems certainly to be Sidney's, though the argument in the *Arcadia* is entirely different; the glass there being the "restraint of crystalline marriage."

11. Both beauty and its natural fruit of beauty would be destroyed.

14. *Leese*, lose. Only here in Shakespeare.

6 1. *ragged*, rugged, rough. Shakespeare uses "ragged," not "rugged," as an epithet of rocks; in *Richard III*, IV, i, 102, the Tower of London is called "Rude, *ragged* nurse."

5. use, interest paid for borrowed money; as in Sonnet 134. 10.

7 5. *steep-up*. So in a Shakespearean sonnet in *The Passionate Pilgrim*: "Her stand she takes upon a *steep-up* hill." "Steep-down" occurs in *Othello*, V, iii, 280. Cf. "steepy" in Sonnet 63. 5.

13. *thyself out-going in thy noon*, i.e. out-going *thyself-in-thy-noon*, passing beyond thy meridian beauty, and so declining.

8 1. "O thou, whom to hear is music, why," etc. (M.).

3, 4. "If you listen to music sadly, it must mean either that you receive not gladly what you love, or that you tolerate what annoys you." The poet takes occasion by the melancholy with which his friend listened to certain music (see *Merchant of Venice*, V, 70) to draw his particular moral.

7. *confounds*. For another example of this form of the second person singular, see 19. 5.

14. "One is no number" was a common saying. Referred to again in 136. 8. It is found in Marlowe's *Hero and Leander*:

One is no number; maids are nothing then,
Without the sweet society of men.

9 4. *makeless*, mateless.

10. his, its.

10 7. *that beauteous roof*. D. and H. explain "house, i.e. family." But this is impossible. Shakespeare regards the perpetuation of his

9. my knowledge I derive. "So, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, iii, 350:

"From women's eyes this doctrine I derive:
They sparkle still the right Promethean fire;
They are the books, the arts, the academes,
That show, contain, and nourish all the world" (S.).

10. art, knowledge; as in the familiar university phrase "master of arts." In mediæval universities the liberal "arts" were grammar, rhetoric, and philosophy, forming the "trivium," and astrology [i.e. astronomy], geometry, arithmetic, and music, forming the "quadrivium."

12. "if thou wouldst change thy single state, and beget a wondrous progeny" (M.).

15 4. comment. The stars are represented as spectators at the play, "cheering and checking." *Influence* was an astrological term; see the passage in *King Lear*, I, ii, 136.

6. check'd, rebuked, as in 136. 1.

9. conceit, idea, recognition.

11. Time and Decay are allies in this "debate" or strife.

14. I engraft. The first reference to the poet's verse.

16 7. you, M. for Q. "your," which D. defends, saying, "'your living flowers' stands over against 'your painted counterfeit.'" But to repeat "your" forces the antithesis too much. The sentence at full length is: "Many maiden gardens would bear you living flowers which would be much liker you than your painted counterfeit is."

8. counterfeit, portrait; as in *Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 115, "fair Portia's counterfeit."

9. lines of life, living lineage, i.e. children; with a play on the word as used of an artist's "pencil" and a poet's "pen."

10. The sense is that children can "repair" a life, or preserve it in men's memories, more effectually than the skill of painter or poet. Q. has "which this (Times pensel or my pupill pen)"; and most commentators accordingly put a comma after "this." But such a rhythm is incredible. The grammatical order of words is "that life, which neither this Time's pencil nor my pupil pen can make you live yourself." "Neither portraiture ('this time's pencil,' cf. line 8) nor description ('my pupil pen,' cf. line 4) can represent you as you are, either in character or beauty."

11. fair, beauty; as in 18. 7, 68. 3, 83. 2.

17 6. fresh, not as Tyler, "successive," "new," but "lively and beautiful" to match the friend's "graces." See Sonnets I. 9, 104. 8, 107. 10.

18 8. *untrimm'd*. To "trim" is to dress up gaily, as in 66. 3; so "untrimmed" means stripped of gay apparel.

10. *that fair thou ow'st*, that beauty thou ownest. For "fair," see 16. 11; for "owe," compare 70. 14.

19 5. *fleets*, Dyce for Q. "fleet'st." Compare "confounds" in 8. 7.

14. The cadence of this line seems to mark the conclusion of the first section.

20 7. *a man in hue*. D. takes "hue" to mean "form," quoting Spenser, *Faerie Queene*, V, ix, 17. Murray (New English Dictionary) recognises this sense of the word, and quotes a clear example from Greene (1590) *Orl. Fur.*, "Thrice hath Cynthia changed her *hue*"; but he points out that contemporary dictionaries recognise only the sense of "colour." In all other places where Shakespeare uses the word it means "appearance," "complexion" (cf. *Pericles*, IV, i, 41, "that excellent *complexion* which did *steal the eyes* of old and young"). A beautiful complexion might be said to "control" others by making the colour come and go, but one shape could have no influence on another. The words "man in" almost certainly are a corruption of some epithet, because a manly hue would neither steal men's eyes nor surprise women's souls; and the whole point of the sonnet is that the friend's beauty is feminine. In the previous two lines his "eye" has been compared with a woman's, and we should expect a similar comparison as to his "hue" to preserve the balance of the double comparison in the first quatrain. I propose, therefore, to read "*a maiden hue*." My friend Mr. J. W. Mackail prefers "*a native hue*" (*Hamlet*, III, i, 84) as being nearer to the *ductus literarum* of "*a man in hue*." That would depend on the handwriting; *id* in an Elizabethan hand looks very like *n* with a final flourish, and for the mistake of *in* for *en*, cf. bitter for better in 91. 9. Further, "native" repeats the point already made in line 1, while "maiden" would prepare the way for line 9.

all hues in his controlling may mean "including and harmonising all particular beauties of complexion in his," an idea put from the other side in Sonnet 53, or perhaps "commanding all other faces by his," an idea expanded in the line that follows. For the conjecture that this line may contain an enigmatic reference to the surname of Mr. W. H., see Introduction, page xlii.

21 1. *that Muse*, not the rival poet mentioned later who praised W. H., for he, *ex hypothesi*, was not a "painted beauty."

13. *like of hearsay*, like vague and exaggerated rumour, instead of precise truth.

14. Cf. 102. 3. "So in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, iii, 239:

"Fie painted rhetoric! O she needs it not:

To things of *sale* a seller's *praise* belongs" (S.).

22 4. expiate, bring to a close. "So in *Richard III*, III, iii, 23: 'Make haste; the hour of death is expiate'" (M.).

13. presume not on, do not expect to receive back.

23 5. for fear of trust, fearful of trusting myself, not knowing what reception I shall get. The parallel with the actor shows that trust is active, not as Schmidt, "doubting of *being* trusted." "Observe the construction: 5-6 refer to 1-2; 7-8 to 3-4." (D.)

9. looks. Q. "books." The reading "looks" was suggested to Malone by Capell, and it is an almost certain emendation, for a distinction between writing and saying is not here to the point. Even if a "book" might be contrasted with a "tongue," and spoken of as "dumb," how could it be a *presager* of speech? And if "what silent love hath writ" is simply a sonnet, why should any one need to "*learn to read*" it? There is no specially "fine wit" in reading an ordinary handwriting. But all the commentators except Butler read "books"; though Boswell with some hesitation. The alliteration of the line confirms the correction.

10. dumb presagers. The reference is to a preliminary dumb show, like that before the play in *Hamlet*. The image of the imperfect actor is still maintained; though he has lost command of his tongue, he can still plead by his looks.

24 1. stell'd, fixed. So in *Lucrece*, 1444.

To this well-painted piece is Lucrece come

To find a face where all distress is *stell'd*.

Q. reads "steel'd," which W. retains, quoting *Venus and Adonis*, 376; but engraving and painting are different arts, and in the passage in *Lucrece*, where the Q. reads "steld," the word is again used of painting. Perhaps it was a virtuoso's word. The parallel with *Lucrece* suggests an early date for the sonnet, which its style confirms.

2. table, that on which a picture is painted; as in *All's Well that Ends Well*, I, i, 106; *King John*, II, 504.

4. perspective. Not here, as often in Shakespeare, the optical illusion so called, but in its ordinary sense, so as to prepare the way for the pun in the next line. This sonnet has the air of being a half-humorous, half-serious parody of a common type of sonnet, such as the following of Constable's *Diana*, V:

Thine eye, the glass where I behold my heart,
Mine eye, the window through the which thine eye
May see my heart, and there thyself espy
In bloody colours how thou painted art.

25 4. unlook'd for, "undistinguished" (W.); but more probably an adverbial use, meaning, contrary to general usage, "most people joy in being honoured, I in honouring."

5-12. "No lines could have been penned more apposite to the fall and disgrace of Essex after his military failure in Ireland" (W.). For a proof of Shakespeare's interest in Essex, see the Prologue to Act V of *Henry I.*

9. fight, Theobald for Q. "worth," or alternatively "forth" for "quite" in line 11.

13, 14. This final couplet points emphatically the general impression given by the sonnet that Shakespeare's friend was not himself a "great prince's favourite"; for in that case the poet's fortune, being involved in his friend's, would have lacked this perfect security. I can see no hint in the sonnet that Shakespeare "is about to undertake a journey on some needful business of his own" (D.).

26 7, 8. The general sense is that the lord is to receive the poet's naked duty, and cover it in his favourable opinion until such time as the poet's better fortune can clothe it himself. The "tatter'd loving" of line 11 is a somewhat different way of expressing the "bare duty" of lines 5, 6.

8. bestow, lodge.

9. moving. There need be no reference in this word to any journey, since it is a general expression for life, as in the phrase "to live, and move, and have our being"; but the word is common in Shakespeare of the "motion" of heavenly bodies, and in one or two places it is used of the movements of men under their influence. Thus *2 Henry IV*, II, iii, 20: "By his light did all the chivalry of England *move* to do brave acts"; *All's Well*, II, i, 56: "eat, speak, and *move* under the influence of the most received star." So that "moving" here may imply journeying. In the former case the sonnet may be taken as envoy to what precedes, in the latter as poem to what follows; for it has the air of a covering letter, enclosing a book of sonnets, being couched in the same formal style as the dedication of *Zucrece* to Lord Southampton. Drake thought this parallel one of the most striking proofs of his contention that the sonnets were addressed to Southampton; and he has been recently followed in this opinion by Lee. But the same writer, wishing to express the same idea, is likely to employ some of the same expressions; though perhaps less likely to do so to the same person.

12. thy, M. for Q. "their." One of many similar corrections; a proof that Shakespeare did not himself see the poems through the press. See Introduction, page lx.

27 1. **toil**, as in the following sonnet, means "the fatigue of travel." We still speak of "toiling along," "a toilsome journey," etc.

6. intend, undertake. The word is frequently used of journeys; and it is not always clear whether to "intend the journey" is to purpose it, or set out upon it.

8. which the blind do see. Introduced for the sake of the difference which follows.

10. M. compares *Romeo and Juliet*, I, v, 48:

It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
Like a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear.

The comparative vagueness of the expression in the sonnet would suggest that it was a reminiscence of the earlier passage in the play. It is only the word "face" that shows us the image intended.

28 12. **twire, twinkle, peep.** The word here was not understood till Boswell found it in Ben Jonson's *Sad Shepherd*, II, ii, where Gifford had an explanatory note giving other instances, the nearest to this passage being Beaumont and Fletcher, *Woman Pleased*, IV, i: "I saw the wench that twir'd and twinkled at thee."

14. strength, Collier for Q. "length," which most editors retain. But it is best to continue the division of the poet's woe between day and night—to the day length of journey, to the night strength of complaint.

29 12. **at heaven's gate.** So the song in *Cymbeline*, II, iii, 21:

Hark, hark, the lark *at heaven's gate* sings.

30 1. **sessions.** So in *Othello*, III, iii, 140:

Keep leets and law-days and in *session* sit
With meditations lawful.

8. expense, loss.

vanished sight. We speak of friends as being "lost to (our) sight." Shakespeare calls each of them a "lost sight."

10. tell, count.

31 5. **obsequious,** concerned with obsequies, funereal. So *Hamlet*, I, ii, 92: "To do *obsequious* sorrow."

7. interest, what is due, claim, right. Cf. 74. 3.

10. lovers, friends. Cf. in *Julius Caesar*, Antony's "Friends, Romans, Countrymen" with Brutus's "Romans, Countrymen, and *Lovers*."

32. "This sonnet reads like an *Envoy*" (D.).

1. well-contented day, the day whose arrival will well content me.

2. that churl Death. Death is represented as a gravedigger. See Sonnet 74. 11, note.

7. reserve, preserve, as in 85. 3.

12. Tyler quotes from Marston's *Metamorphosis of Pigmalion's Image* (1598):

Stanzaes like odd bands
Of voluntaries and mercenarians:
Which like soldados of our warlike age,
March rich bedight in warlike equipage.

Lee quotes from Nash's Preface to Greene's *Menaphon* (1589) that the works of the poet Watson "*march in equipage* of honour with any of your ancient poets," which is a closer and earlier parallel with Shakespeare's sonnet and prevents the necessity of arguing the question whether Shakespeare borrowed from Marston.

33. The "sensual fault" in the poet's friend for which he here remonstrates with him seems to be that which is more plainly indicated in the series 40-42.

2. sovereign. The sun is compared to a monarch whose eye "flatters" whatever it rests upon.

4. alchymy. "So in *King John*, III, i, 77:

"The glorious sun
Stays in his course and plays the *alchemist*" (S.).

But the thought and expression in *King John* are less refined; the passage continues:

Turning with splendour of his precious eye
The meagre cloddy earth to glittering gold.

6. rack, clouds of the upper air, called in line 12 "*region* cloud." Cf. Bacon, *Sylva Sylvarum*: "The winds in the upper *region*, which move the *clouds above*, which we call the *rack*, pass without noise," quoted by Dyce. For a parallel passage in *Henry IV*, see Introduction, page xxv.

12. region cloud, cloud of the sky.

14. stain, grow dim. The word is used transitively in 35. 3.

34 4. rotten smoke. "So in *Coriolanus*, III, iii, 121: '*reek* o' the *rotten fens*'" (S.), where *reek*, like *smoke*, is used for "vapour," and *rotten* implies its unwholesomeness. So *rotten damp* in *Lucrece*, 778; *rotten humidity* in *Timon of Athens*, IV, iii, 2.

12. cross, M. for Q. "losse," quoting Sonnet 42, which is on the same subject and more explicit.

35 6. The poet "makes a fault" in justifying his friend's misconduct by the comparisons in lines 2-4; by thus "salving" his friend's "amiss" he "corrupts" himself.

7. Capell proposed "myself corrupt in salving thy amiss."

8. The necessary sense is plain from the line which follows. The poet sins worse than his friend because in his excuse he sins against reason; and this can be got out of the reading "Excusing thy sins more than thy sins are," by taking "more" in the sense of worse; i.e. "Excusing thy sins with more wickedness than they themselves denote." Q. reads "Excusing *their* sins more than *their* sins are," which M. corrected; and this W. as usual defends, but only in the second half of the line, referring it back to "all men make faults." D. quotes Steevens: "making the excuse more than proportioned to the offence." But the poet blames the offence, only he blames the excuse even more. If line 8 must be emended, the simplest change would be: "excusing thee sins more than thy sins are." Perhaps we should adopt Capell's conjecture in line 7, "myself corrupt *in* salving thy amiss," making a pause after the seventh line as in 51.

9. sense, reason.

36. Professor Dowden, who shows infinite ingenuity in connecting every sonnet with its predecessor, introduces this with the sentence: "According to the announcement made in 35, Shakespeare proceeds to make himself out the guilty party." But the poet has made no such announcement. He has called himself an "accessory," more to blame than the principal because he defends his action by arguments of reason. But that is a long way from "making himself out the guilty party." The sonnets from 36 to 39 must refer to a different topic; 36 refers to some "blots" upon the poet, and 37 to the friend's "truth" as atoning for the spite of fortune. The subject of the friend's wrong to the poet is resumed in 40, probably because the offence has been repeated during the poet's absence referred to in 39. 9.

1. twain, divided from each other by space. See 39. 5.

5. respect, regard, affection. Cf. *Pericles*, III, iii, 33, "dear to my respect."

6. separable spite, "a cruel fate, that spitefully separates us from each other. *Separable* for *separating*" (M.).

10. my bewailed guilt. We have no clear light from any other passage in the sonnets upon this expression; it may connect with the "harmful deeds" of Sonnet 111, but these are not explained further, though they are referred to the "public manners" induced by the poet's profession.

13, 14. These lines are repeated as the concluding couplet of Sonnet 96, where they are much less in place.

37 3. lame. The lameness must be metaphorical to keep the proportion with "worth and truth." But a few commentators take it literally.

Capell did so, and Butler thinks that the line in Sonnet 89, "Speak of my *lameness*, and I straight will halt," implies that Shakespeare, though he had by that time recovered from the accident here referred to, still limped occasionally. Perhaps this way of interpreting the line, as an instance of nervous imitation, meets Malone's objection that "if Shakespeare was in truth lame, he had it not in his power to halt *occasionally*." But the line in Sonnet 89 will not bear Butler's interpretation. Its whole point is that although the poet was *not* lame, he would pretend to be if his friend chose to say he was so. The word is, in fact, very common in Shakespeare as a metaphor. A good parallel is quoted by Dowden from *King Lear*, IV, vi, 225, Q. . "A most poor man *made lame by Fortune's blows*."

7. entitled, having a title, a claim, to. W. has a very long note on this line in which he attempts to show that "intituled," "parts," and "crowned" are used in a heraldic sense. But the only one of the three words for which he cites Guillim is "parts." "Intituled" occurs in a more or less heraldic passage in *Lucretia*, 55-58, but not in any technically heraldic sense :

When Beauty boasted blushes, in despite
Virtue would stain that or with silver white;
But Beauty, in that white entitled
From Venus' doves, doth challenge that fair field,

where "entituled in that white," etc., means "having a claim to white from its being the colour of Venus' doves." Similarly in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 822,

If this thou do deny, let our hands part
Neither *intitled* in the other's heart,

it means "having a claim to." Here it may be used absolutely, "in thy parts" being construed with "crowned"; or perhaps "in thy parts" is constructed with both. "These excellences sit crowned in thy various parts to which they have a claim."

10. shadow. Often in Shakespeare contrasted with "substance" to express the particular sort of unreality of which "substance" expresses the reality. Here "substance" means the possession by the poet of the excellences of his friend, and "shadow" the imaginary possession of them. For similar contrasts, see Sonnet 53, *Richard II*, II, ii, 14; *Titus Andronicus*, III, ii, 80.

38 3. argument, theme. So in Sonnet 76. 10, etc.

13. curious, accurate, critical; as in *Romco and Juliet*, I, iv, 31:

what care I

What *curious* eye doth quote deformities?

39 12. which refers back to "love."

doth, M. for Q. "dost."

13. one, the friend.

40. With the three ensuing sonnets should be read Sonnets 133-136, 143-144, which deal with the same subject, an intrigue of the poet's friend with some lady unknown.

5. for my love, "for love of me" (D.); "in place of my love for you" (W.). It is better to explain "*as being* my love," to which you have a right.

6. for my love thou usest, because it is still my love that thou usest; or it may be taken as D., "(I cannot blame thee) for using my love."

7. thyself, M. for Q. "this selfe." deceivest, misleadest.

8. This line perhaps means "by taking in wilfulness my mistress whom yet you do not love." D. interprets, "By an unlawful union while you refuse loyal wedlock."

41 8. she, M. for Q. "he."

43 1. wink, close my eyes in sleep. A frequent use in Shakespeare. So in *The Tempest*, II, i, 285, Antonio proposes to put Gonzalo "to the perpetual *wink*," meaning to kill him.

2. unrespected, which I do not notice.

4. "and illumined, though closed, are clearly directed in the darkness" (D.).

5. shadow, image.

shadows, of night.

6. thy shadow's form, thy form that casts the shadow.

44 9. thought, care, melancholy. Frequent in the phrase *take thought*, as in the Gospels, "take no thought"; *Julius Caesar*, II, i, 187; "take thought and die for Cæsar," etc. Cf. "thought-sick" in *Hamlet*, III, iv, 51².

10. when, should possibly be "where."

11. so much of earth and water wrought, being wrought in such large measure of these "slower elements." References to man's composition from the four elements are fairly common. Sir Toby (*Twelfth Night*, II, iii, 10) asks: "Does not our life consist of the four elements?" M. quotes appositely *Henry V*, III, vii, 22: "He is pure air and fire; and the dull elements of earth and water never appear in him"; also *Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 292:

I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life.

14. heavy tears. Perhaps the salt in the tears represents the contribution of the earth; and so tears are a badge of the woe of both earth and water.

46. This and the following sonnet are upon a fashionable Elizabethan topic; and no better proof could be afforded of the superiority of Shakespeare's genius over that of his sonneteering contemporaries than the feeling of boredom which these occasional lapses into the conventional strain induce in his modern readers. W. collects the following parallels: "Cf. Watson's *Tears of Fancie*, Sonnets 19-20 (1593); Constable's *Diana*, Third Decade, Sonnet 9; Sixth Decade, Sonnet 7 (1594); Drayton's *Idea*, Sonnet 33 (1594, rewritten 1619)."

9. 'cide, M. for Q. "side."

10. quest, "an inquest or jury" (M.).

12. moiety, portion.

47 10. art, M. for Q. "are."

48 11, 14. So in *Venus and Adonis*, 782: "the quiet closure of my breast" (Boswell); and in the same poem, 724: "Rich preys make *true* men thieves" (Capell).

49 3. cast his utmost sum, added up its account to the last item, with a view to having it audited and closed.

4. advis'd respects, considered motives; opposed to mere caprice, as in *King John*, IV, ii, 214: "More upon humour than advis'd respect."

8. reasons of settled gravity, not "*weighty* reasons for change" (as 11.), but "reasons for changing to a grave and reserved deportment," which is the constant use of "gravity" in Shakespeare. S. compares *Julius Caesar*, IV, ii, 21

When love begins to sicken and decay,
It useth an enforced ceremony.

9. ensconce, shelter (as it were behind a fortification).

10. desert, i.e. want of desert. The rhyme requires the pronunciation "desart," which the Q. reads.

11. hand uprear, as a witness in a court of law.

50 6. dully, M. for Q. "duly," comparing 51. 2.

51 1. slow offence, offence which consists in slowness.

8. Even could I fly I should scarcely seem to move.

11. race, "running" (D.); "breed," as in *Merchant of Venice*, V, 72: "a *race* of youthful and unhandled colts" (W.). The sense is much the same in either case; but if "race" be explained as "breed," there is no word to imply that Desire gallops off home; he is left neighing.

12. for love. The horse's slowness was a sign of love for the friend.

14. go, walk. For the contrast, cf. *Two Gentlemen*, III, i, 388: "Thou must *run* to him, for thou hast stayed so long that *going* will scarce serve the turn."

52 4. For, for fear of.

8. captain jewels. For "captain" used as an adjective, see Sonnet 66. 12. Murray quotes from T. Stapylton (1566), "a manifest and *captain* untruth," and from Mulcaster (1581), "Sound sleep, the *captain* cause of good digestion."

carcanet, a collar of jewels.

On this sonnet, see Introduction, page xxvi.

53 2. strange, "not properly your own." The *shadows* are those referred to in the verses following, Adonis, Helen, spring, and autumn.

8. tires. A tire is a headdress. See *Merry Wives*, III, iii, 60.

9. foison, harvest.

11. bounty. So in *Antony and Cleopatra*, V, ii, 86:

For his *bounty*
There was no winter in 't; an *autumn* 't was.

54 5. canker-blooms, dog roses. "So in *Much Ado*, I, iii, 28: 'I had rather be a *canker* in a hedge than a *rose* in his grace'" (M.), and *1 Henry IV*, I, iii, 176:

To put down Richard, that sweet lovely *rose*,
And plant this thorn, this *canker* Bolingbroke.

8. masked buds discloses. The word "disclose" would seem here to be suggested by the epithet; the wind's opening the rose being compared to a rough lover's pulling off a lady's visor. But the word is used of the wild rose without this special meaning in *Hamlet*, I, iii, 40:

The chariest maid is prodigal enough,
If she *unmask* her beauty to the moon:
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes:
The *canker* galls the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons be *disclosed*.

It is curious to note that in this passage the word "unmask" is found, and also "canker," though in a different sense. It is not impossible that the two passages may have been written about the same time, and that the one is something of an echo of the other. For an argument for date drawn from lines 5, 6, see Introduction, page xxvi.

9. for, "because. So in *Othello*, III, iii, 263: 'Haply, *for* I am black'" (M.), and in many other places.

12. For the same reference to the distillation of roses, see Sonnet 5. 9; only there it was marriage that was the distiller, and beauty that was distilled.

13. lovely, being distinguished from "beauteous," shows that the word had not quite lost its meaning of "attractive." So in *Othello*, IV, ii, 68: "so lovely fair."

14. my, M. for Q. "by," which D. retains. For another example of the same blunder, see Drayton's sonnet (1594) in Collier's edition. (No. 13.)

55 1. monuments, M. for Q. "monument."

12. wear this world out. To "wear out" is a common Shakespearean expression for "spend," used of time; often as here with a notion of "wearing away." Cf. *King Lear*, IV, vi, 138:

O ruin'd piece of nature! This great world
Shall so wear out to nought.

13. that, when; not as D. and W., "till the *decree of the judgment day* that you arise."

56. I agree with W. in taking this sonnet as opening a new section; not with D. as a continuation of previous sonnets of absence. The "interim" of line 9 is a period of apathy, not of separation, the poet does not here say on whose part, but makes the poem quite general, and speaks of the "spirit of love" in either or both. Perhaps with the same object, he leaves the reference to the separated lovers as general as possible.

6. wink, shut in sleep. See 43. 1.

9. the ocean, any ocean that separates lovers. There does not seem to be a reference to any particular story, such as that of Hero and Leander.

11. banks: applied to the seashore; as in *Merchant of Venice*, V, 11:

In such a night
Stood Dido with a willow in her hand
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waft her love
To come again to Carthage.

13. or, M. (from Tyrwhitt's suggestion) for Q. "as."

57 5. world-without-end, everlasting, that seems as if it would never end. So *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 799:

A time, methinks, too short
To make a world-without-end bargain in.

See Introduction, page xxv.

58 3. to. For the insertion of the preposition following an auxiliary, which is frequent in Shakespeare, cf. *Julius Caesar*, I, ii, 173:

Brutus had rather be a villager
Than *to* repute himself a son of Rome.

6. suffer . . . the imprison'd absence of your liberty, suffer your absence, which, though it represent liberty to you, means imprisonment to me.

7. tame to sufferance, subdued so as to suffer; as "tame to their obedience" in *King John*, IV, ii, 262.

11. Do what you will, M. for Q. "to," which D., W., and H. keep; but the rhythm and sense of the quatrain are against it. "Do what you will" answers rhetorically to "Be where you list"; else there is no verb of "doing" leading up to "self-doing crime," as "be" to "privilege your time." Cf. *Julius Caesar*, IV, iii, 109: "Do what you will, dishonour shall be humour."

59. This sonnet anticipates the thought of Sonnets 106 and 123.

8. character, writing. Malone has expressed the sense rightly, but with too much precision, when he paraphrases, "Would that I could read a description of you in the earliest manuscript that appeared after the first use of letters."

11. whe'r, a common Elizabethan contraction of "whether"; spelled "where" in old texts.

60 1. pebbled. Q. "pibled."

5. The image is changed from the sea to the heavens, and "nativity" or "birth" is compared to the sun crawling up the sky, called "the main of light" to distinguish it from "the main of waters" (*Merchant of Venice*, V, 97).

7. Crooked, like "thwart," is often used for "malignant."

eclipses, I suspect, is used vaguely of any sort of obscuration. Cf. 35-3, "clouds and eclipses."

8. Death is compared to sunset.

9. In the third quatrain the figure is again changed. Time appears in person with his conventional dart and scythe, and also with a spade, perhaps as a gravedigger.

flourish set on youth, the outward painting of youth, i.e. youth so beautifully *flourished* or painted. Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III, iv, 404:

The beauteous evil
Are empty trunks o'er-flourished by the devil.

10. So Sonnets 2. 2, 19. 9.

11. nature's truth, "that which is naturally and genuinely beautiful and excellent, as opposed to what is meretricious and artificial" (Tyler).

13 Schmidt takes "in hope" with "stand"; but the previous line shows that "stand" is used absolutely for "endure"; D. paraphrases "times in hope" by "future times," and that must be the meaning; "in hope" = "unborn." Cf. 97. 10, "*hope* of orphans."

61. This sonnet continues the subject already broached in 57, 58, and reintroduces the idea of 43; only there it is in dreams, here in waking thought, that his friend visits him.

11. defeat, undo. Cf. *Hamlet*, I, ii, 10: "a *defeated* joy."

62 5. gracious, lovely. "So in *King John*, III, iv, 81. 'There was not such a gracious creature born'" (M.).

7. And for myself mine own worth do define. Lettsom conjectures "And *so* myself"; but in that case we must read "*does* define," as "myself" in Shakespeare is always followed by the third person of the verb. If any correction is made, it would be better to read "And *I* myself mine own worth *so* define," but it is simpler to understand the omission of the personal pronoun understood from "methinks": "I for myself mine own worth do define, as though," etc.

8. other. For this form of the plural, cf. 85. 5.

10. beated, battered. This form of the participle is found, though not elsewhere in Shakespeare. M. conjectured "bated," quoting *Merchant of Venice*, I, iii, 125, "with *bated* breath"; to which D. adds from the same play (III, iii, 32), "These griefs and losses have so *bated* me." II. says "flayed. Properly an agricultural term (still used in Devonshire) for paring away the sods from moorland."

chopped, marked with cracks, seamed. Cf. *Lucrece*, 1452: "Her cheeks with *chops* and wrinkles were disguised." [Same word as *chap*.]

63 9. For such a time, referring back to line 1, "against [the time when] my love shall be crush'd," etc.

fortify: used intransitively as in *2 Henry IV*, I, iii, 56: "We *fortify* in paper and in figures."

64. With this sonnet Capell compared *2 Henry IV*, III, i, 45-51:

O God, that one might read the book of fate;
And see the revolution of the times
Make mountains level, and the continent,
Weary of solid firmness, melt itself
Into the sea! and other times to see
The beachy girdle of the ocean
Too wide for Neptune's hips;

and D. notes that "the king goes on to meditate on the 'interchange of state' in his time in England." On the argument for the date of the sonnet based upon this parallel, see Introduction, page xxvi.

4. **eternal** is the epithet of "brass," not "slave."

9, 10. **state** . . . **state**. The words are used in different senses; "state" in line 9 means "condition," in line 10 it means "greatness," as in 96. 12.

13. **which**. The antecedent is "thought."

65 4. **action**, vigour. So in *Julius Caesar*, I, iii, 77:

A man no mightier than myself or thee
In personal *action*.

There is no reference, as D. suggests, to an action at law; for the comparison is with the physical strength of brass, stone, etc.

5, 6. Summer is represented as besieged by Winter, who is one of the forces of Time.

10. The expression is elliptical. Where shall what is Time's best jewel be hidden so as to escape being seized and locked up in his chest? For "Time's chest," cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, III, iii, 145: "Time hath, my lord, a wallet at his back," etc. Compare also, for the abstract nouns, *Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii, 114-124.

12. **of**, M. for Q. "or."

66. "Compare Hamlet's celebrated soliloquy with this sonnet" (C.).

1. **all these**, the woes following.

3. **needy nothing**, opposed to *desert*, what lacks all merit.

4. **forsworn**, renounced.

5. **gilded honour**, honour that is only gilded. Cf. *Troilus and Cressida*, III, iii, 178: "dust that is a little gilt."

misplac'd, put into high place above its desert. Cf. Pandolph's phrase, "the *misplac'd* John," *King John*, III, iv, 133.

8-10. Various forms of "right" overcome by "might"; in the state (perhaps in the army), in literature, and in science.

9. **art**. See 14. 10, note.

11. **simplicity**, silliness. We have the sense remaining in "simpleton," "simple Simon."

67. This sonnet and the next are, like the last, in dispraise of the present evil times; but they are concerned with a more superficial fault, namely, the use of cosmetics and false hair, which, as we may judge from certain passages in the plays, seems to have been especially repugnant to Shakespeare. See *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 256; *Hamlet*, III, i, 150; *Merchant of Venice*, III, ii, 92; *Timon of Athens*, IV, iii, 144.

1, 2. **infection**, **impiety**, i.e. this sinful world.

4. **lace itself with**, wear as lace.

5. In the second quatrain the friend's beauty is said to be an occasion of impiety to the world because the world counterfeits it.

6. seeing, what is seen, appearance.

7. *poor beauty*, insignificant beauty. W. takes "poor" to mean "begged," and personifies Beauty. But Shakespeare is usually faithful to rhetorical parallelism within the quatrain; and here "poor beauty" corresponds to "false painting," not to "bankrupt Nature."

12. *lives upon his gains*. Nature being bankrupt is said to live upon the friend's gains; or rather the question is asked why he should be allowed to be "begged of blood" in order to feed Nature's pride in her other children.

68 1. *map*: used by Shakespeare for a picture, especially of the face (once in the strict sense of a picture of the earth; *Coriolanus*, II, i, 61: "If you see this in the *map* of my *microcosm*").

3. *fair, beauty*; as in 16. 11, etc.

10. all, any. Frequent after "without" (as in 74. 2), especially in the phrase "without *all* remedy."

13. 14. Compare the last couplet of Sonnet 67.

69 5. *Thy, M. for Q. "their."*

10. *thy*. An early and anonymous conjecture is "their." And we may ask, Why should people be called "churls" for judging a man by his own deeds? Moreover, the ensuing sonnet seems to say that the common opinion is slander. But a line in 121. 12, "By their rank thoughts my deeds must not be shown," implies that deeds are capable of various interpretations; and the impression we get from the sonnet is that the poet believes (or tries to believe) his friend to be really good despite certain lapses. See 95. 13.

14. *solve, M. for Q. "solye."* Cambridge ed., "soil," quoting "this question could not one of them all *soil*" from Udall.

common, too little choice in your company. So *Coriolanus*, II, iii, 101: "I have not been *common* in my love."

70 3, 13. *suspect, suspicion*. So in *Richard III*, III, v, 32: "He lived from all attainder of *suspect*."

5-8. The argument of the second quatrain is that as temptation to vice is greatest in the case of youths whose attractiveness renders them popular, so the fact of being slandered is a testimony to popularity, and does not matter provided there is no ground for the slander.

6. *Thy, M. for Q. "their."*

would of time, courted by the world. For "time" in this sense, compare Sonnet 117. 6, where it is paraphrased by "unknown minds"; *Hamlet*, III, i, 70: "Who would bear the whips and scorns of *time*, the oppressor's wrong," etc. W. personifies Time here and in Sonnet 117,

and collects the numerous passages in the sonnets where Time undoubtedly is personified; but the attempt to bind Shakespeare to a formal consistency misleads his editor here, as in 54. 5 with reference to "canker-blooms." D. paraphrases "being solicited or tempted by the present time," which implies the explanation given above, while it has the advantage of preparing the way for what follows,—"for canker vice," etc. But "woo'd of time" is in itself a colorless phrase, like "courted by the world."

14. owe, own; as in 18. 10.

71 2. "So in *2 Henry IV*, I, i, 102:

"and his tongue
Sounds ever after as a *sullen bell*,
Remember'd knelling a departed friend" (M.).

10. compounded am with clay. "*Compounded* is mixed, blended. So in *2 Henry IV*, IV, v, 116: "Only *compound* me with forgotten dust" (M.). Cf. also *Hamlet*, IV, ii, 6: "What have you done, my lord, with the dead body? *Compounded it with dust*, whereto 't is kin."

72 4. prove, find: usually in the sense of "ascertain," rather than "discover"; but compare *Lucrece*, 613: "When they in thee the like offences *prove*."

14. The first notice that Shakespeare's friend takes any interest in his poems.

73 4. Bare ruined choirs where late the sweet birds sang. This superb sonnet has not been without an operation upon its commentators, whose style it has raised. I transcribe from the 1821 Variorum: "The Q. has—Bare *ru'nd* quiers—from which the reader must extract what meaning he can. The edition of our author's poems in 1640 has *ruin'd*. *Quires* or *choirs* here means that part of cathedrals where divine service is performed, to which when uncovered and in ruins,

A naked subject to the weeping clouds,

the poet compares the trees at the end of autumn, stripped of that foliage which at once invited and sheltered the feathered songsters of summer; whom Ford, a contemporary and friend of our author's, with an allusion to the same kind of imagery, calls, in his 'Lover's Melancholy,' 'the quiristers of the woods.' So in *Cymbeline*:

"Then was I as a *tree*
Whose boughs did bend with fruit; but in one night
A storm, or robbery, call it what you will,
Shook down my mellow hangings, nay, my *leaves*
And left me *bare to weather*" (M.).

"The image was probably suggested to Shakespeare by our desolated monasteries. The resemblance between the vaulting of a Gothick isle, and an avenue of trees whose upper branches meet and form an arch over-head is too striking not to be acknowledged. When the roof of the one is shattered, and the boughs of the other leafless, the comparison becomes yet more solemn and picturesque" (S.).

"This most beautiful image was nearer and more vivid when many great abbeys, opened to the weather within the memory of men living, were beginning to be ruins ere they were forgotten as 'chantries where the sad and solemn priests sing'" (W.).

10. "Mr. Gray perhaps remembered these lines: 'Even in our *ashes* glow [live] their wonted fires'" (M.).

12. Choked by the ashes which once nourished its flame. D. says "wasting away on the dead ashes"; but as ashes certainly can choke flame, so the weakness of the body can react upon the mental powers.

14. leave, surrender, renounce.

74 1, 2. There is perhaps nothing, even in the sonnets, equal in dignity and beauty to this calm opening. The merit of the editing of the Q. text may be estimated from the fact that it has no stop after "contented."

when that fell arrest, etc. "So in *Hamlet*, V, ii, 347:

"Had I but time (as this *fell serjeant*, *Death*,
Is strict in his *arrest*), O I could tell you" (C.).

2. all, any. See note on 68. 10.

3. this line, this verse; as in Sonnet 71. 5.

11. D. thus gives the various possible meanings of this line: "Does Shakspeare merely speak of the liability of the body to untimely or violent mischance? Or does he meditate suicide? Or think of Marlowe's death, and anticipate such a fate as possibly his own? Or has he, like Marlowe, been wounded? Or does he refer to dissection of dead bodies? Or is it 'confounding age's cruel knife' of 63. 10?" To help us to decide among these various suggestions, we may note that the epithets "coward" and "wretch" dispose of the second. Hamlet speaks of "cowardice" as preventing a man from suicide; but Shakespeare nowhere calls suicide cowardice. Against the notion of dissection we may put the rhetoric and rhythm of the verse, which will not allow "the coward conquest," etc., to be antithetical to "the prey of worms," when "the dregs of life" and "my body" are not so. The sequence of the sonnets here, the one immediately precedent dealing with old age, excludes the idea that Shakespeare had himself been

wounded; and (despite the fate of Marlowe) the probabilities of being stabbed in Elizabethan England were so remote that in a general reference to death the assassin would be quite out of place. I incline, therefore, to D.'s last suggestion, and take the "wretch" to be Death, but the image is derived from the "arrest without bail" in lines 1, 2. Death is the executioner. For "coward," cf. *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 15: "Thou'rt by no means valiant."

13. that, my body.

14. this, poetry.

75. This sonnet is perhaps misplaced; it would come better after 52.

1. so refers on to "as." See 52. 1.

3. for the peace of you, to enjoy the peace, content, to be found in you; antithesis to "strife."

14 repeats 13. I alternately pine or surfeit, taking all my pleasure in your presence, in your absence having none.

76. This sonnet opens a new section dealing with the poet's verse and that of other writers. We have already had one sonnet on this topic (32). If 76 and 77 were interchanged, the subject would run on without a break.

6, 7. Why do my verses wear always the same familiar dress so that they are at once recognised for mine? This passage, the meaning of which in its context is perfectly clear, is one of the stock texts with the wiseacres who think that the sonnets were written by Francis Bacon. They explain "noted weed" to mean "a disguise," which is exactly what it does not mean.

7. tell, M. for Q. "fel."

77. "Probably this sonnet was designed to accompany a present of a book consisting of blank paper. Lord Orrery sent a birthday gift of the same kind to Swift, together with a copy of verses of the same tendency" (S.). "This conjecture appears to me extremely probable. We learn from the 122nd sonnet that Shakespeare received a *table-book* from his friend" (M.). D. conjectures that Shakespeare "here ceased to write, knowing that his friend was favouring a rival, and invited his friend to fill up the blank pages himself." We may note that the phrases in lines 3 and 10, "*the vacant leaves*," "*these waste blanks*," seem to imply that the album was not altogether unwritten in; but they would be justified if the dedicatory sonnet occupied the first page. The sonnet is so out of key with what precedes and follows it, that it is best to treat it as an occasional poem to which we have not the complete clue. The "wrinkles" of line 5 makes it impossible to regard it as an *envoi* to the sonnets before it.

3. The. "Perhaps Shakespeare wrote '*these* vacant leaves'; so afterwards '*these* waste blanks'" (M.).

4. And thou mayst taste of this learning—what the glass and dial have taught thee—by means of this book. This explanation is confirmed by line 12; the thoughts are written down and forgotten, but by means of the book "take a *new* acquaintance" of his mind.

7. *shady stealth*. Cf. 104. 10.

10. blanks, Theobald for Q. "blacks."

13. These offices, the offices of glass, dial, and book.

78 3. As, that.

my use, of invoking thee as a Muse.

4. under thee, under thy inspiration.

5-8. The "dumb ignorant" is Shakespeare; the "gracious learned" is some other poet of whom we thus hear for the first time. H. takes lines 5, 6 to refer contemptuously to rivals, but see line 14, "*my* rude ignorance"

9. compile, compose. So in Sonnet 85. 2: "comments of your praise, richly *compiled*"; and *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, iii, 134. Marlowe (*Hero and Leander*, I, 127) speaks of "compiling" satires.

79 5. thy lovely argument, the theme of your loveliness. For "argument," see before, Sonnet 38. 3.

80 7. saucy, impudent. "The same thought occurs in *Troilus and Cressida*, I, iii, 34:

"The sea being smooth,
How many shallow bauble boats dare sail
Upon her patient breast, making their way
With those of nobler bulk!
But let the ruffian Boreas once enrage
The gentle Thetis, and anon behold
The strong-ribb'd bark through liquid mountains cut,
Bounding between the two moist elements
Like Perseus' horse; where 's then the *saucy* boat," etc. (S.).

8. wilfully, recklessly, saucily. A usual epithet of "boys." So in *Merchant of Venice*, I, i, 146:

I owe you much, and like a *wilful* boy,
That which I owe is lost.

81. This sonnet is plainly misplaced; its theme is conventional.

3. From hence, as in line 5, means "from my verses."

4. in me each part, every characteristic of me.

12. breathers of this world. "So in *As You Like It*, III, ii, 297: 'I will chide no *breather* in the world but myself'" (M.).

14. As one who lives is called *par excellence* a "breather" (line 12), you shall live in the very realm of breath.

82 2. **attaint** means both "disgrace" and "impeachment." Either sense would serve here.

4. **blessing every book**, i.e. every book presented. The dedications here spoken of were not necessarily printed.

5, 6. It is the learning of the rival poet, already referred to in Sonnet 78, that gives him his advantage over Shakespeare.

11. **sympathised**, answered to, matched. So in *Lucrece*, 1113:

True sorrow then is feelingly sufficed
When with like semblance it is *sympathised*.

83 2. **fair**, beauty; as in 16. 11, etc.

5. "And therefore I have not sounded your praises" (M.).

7. **modern**, commonplace, ordinary. Cf. *As You Like It*, II, vii, 156: "Full of wise saws and *modern* instances."

12. **tomb**. Explained by Sonnet 17. 4:

my verse . . . is but as a *tomb*
Which hides your life and shows not half your parts.

84 1, 2. The punctuation is M.'s. Q. does not mark the question.

3. **store**. See 67. 13, 68. 13: "The whole wealth of Beauty, which should show your parallel, is enclosed in you" (W.).

11. **counterpart**, copy.

13. **curse**, antithesis to "blessings," and so a not much stronger word than "disadvantage"; perhaps "misfortune" comes nearest in modern English. Compare *Winter's Tale*, II, iii, 86:

He will not —
For as the case now stands, it is a *curse*
He cannot be compelled to — once remove
The root of his opinion;

Two Gentlemen, V, iv, 43:

'T is the *curse* in love,
When women cannot love where they're beloved.

14. **fond on**, doting on.

which makes your praises worse. Praise spoils your "praises," which, as above said, should be mere description of your excellence. Or the construction may be "being fond of such (inadequate) praise as," etc.

85 3. **reserve their character**, etc. The sense required from this obscure line is an antithesis to line 1, the antithesis expressed quite clearly in line 5: "I think good thoughts whilst other write good words." This third line, therefore, must mean "are written down with golden quill."

"Character" means "writing," as in Sonnet 59. 8; for "reserve," therefore, we should expect "receive"; and for that "reserve" may be a misreading of the MS., or it may be used as a strong way of saying "are written in a permanent form for posterity." M. explains "reserve" as "preserve," quoting Sonnet, 32. 7, but he does not explain the passage. D. suggests "deserve," but this would not go well with line 4. W. keeps the Q. "reserve" and explains "preserve or treasure up their style by labouring it preciously"; but "character" does not mean "style." Mackail suggests "rescribe."

5. other. For this form of the plural, cf. 62. 8.

7. that able spirit. The "better spirit" of Sonnet 80. See Introduction, section VIII.

11. that, "that which I add" (D.).

14. effect, meaning, intent. For the contrast of "word" and "effect," cf. *Timon*, III, v, 97; *As You Like It*, IV, iii, 35.

86 1. proud full sail. So in Sonnet 80. 6: "proudest sail."

4. "So in *Romeo and Juliet*, II, iii, 9:

"The earth, that's nature's *mother*, is her *tomb*;
What is her burying *grave*, that is her *womb*."

So also Milton: "The womb of Nature and perhaps her grave" (M.).

10. "Alluding perhaps to the celebrated Dr. Dee's pretended intercourse with an angel and other familiar spirits" (S.).

13. fil'd. Q. "fild," which S. (followed by M.) took to be "filed" (as in 85. 4); but in the next line the words "lacked matter" show that "filled" is the right reading. D. points out that the Q. distinguishes "fild" (filled) from "fil'd" (filed).

87 3. charter, privilege; as in Sonnet 58. 9.

4. determinate, "determined, ended, out of date. The term is used in legal conveyances" (M.).

8. patent, granted privilege.

11. upon misprision growing, arising from an oversight. W. quotes from Minshew: "Misprision signifieth in our Common Law, neglect, or negligence, or oversight."

88 1. set me light, "esteem me little. So *Richard II*, I, iii, 293:

"For gnarling sorrow hath less power to bite
The man that mocks at it and sets it light" (D.).

2. place my merit in the eye of scorn, look scornfully upon my merit. It seems hardly right to say with M. that scorn is personified; "the eye of scorn" is the friend's eye, now become scornful.

6, 7. To justify you I can set down a list of secret faults, sufficient to disgrace me. S. compares *Hamlet*, III, i, 123.

8. shalt. Sewall for Q. "shall."

89 2. comment, moralise. So of Jaques (*As You Like It*, II, i, 65),

weeping and *commenting*

Upon the sobbing deer,

it was asked, "Did he not *moralise* this spectacle?"

3. Call me lame, and I will go lame straightway. See note on 37. 3.

6. form. "Colour" is more usual in this sense of "pretext."

8. strangle. "This uncouth phrase seems to have been a favourite with Shakespeare" (S.). It occurs as a metaphor in *Twelfth Night*, V, 150; *Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 47; *Henry VIII*, V, i, 157; *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, iv, 39; *Antony and Cleopatra*, II, vi, 130.

13. debate, quarrel.

90 2, 3. Does this "spite of fortune" refer to the troubles of Shakespeare's company, due to the popularity of the boy actors? See *Hamlet*, II, ii, 352.

4. drop in, come in unexpectedly. The phrase is still in use. This is the earliest instance quoted by Murray.

13. strains of woe. The passage in *Much Ado about Nothing*, V, i, 12, —

Measure his *woe* the length and breadth of mine
And let it answer every *strain* for *strain*,
As thus for thus and such a grief for such,
In every lineament, branch, shape, and form, —

seems to fix the meaning of "strain" in both places as "sort," "kind," which connects with the root meaning of "race."

91 4. horse. For the plural W. compares the phrase "Master of the Horse."

10. richer, prouder. "So in *Cymbeline*, III, iii, 23:

"O this life
Is nobler than attending for a check,
Richer than doing nothing for a bribe,
Prouder than rustling in unpaid-for silk" (S.).

92 10. my life on thy revolt doth lie, my life depends on your desertion; i.e. your desertion will kill me. Compare *All's Well*, III, vii, 43: "As if his *life* lay on it."

93. This sonnet, suggested by the friend's "mask of beauty" (W.), is in praise of self-control.

1. supposing, under the idea.

94 2. A general expression, implying here the power to show love without feeling it.

5. They rightly do inherit. It is right that self-possessed people should be intrusted with beauty, because they do not squander it in passion.

8. Others but stewards. The common idea of stewardship is that of husbandry, which is by line 6 excluded. It implies here, on the contrary, "spending." Beautiful persons who are not self-possessed are declared to have no ownership in their beauty, because it is always being spent by them at the command of Love, Anger, Remorse, and other passions, who are consequently the true owners.

9-12. The general sense of the quatrain is that the pleasure which beautiful persons give to the world is as great if they live their own lives and give no thought to the admiration they excite; whereas if they allow themselves to be corrupted they cease to give any pleasure at all. *Corruptio optima pessima.*

14. "This line is likewise found in the anonymous play of King Edward III, 1596" (S.). A line that embalms a proverb may be expected to occur in more than one context, and no safe conclusion can be drawn as to the priority of one over another. Hence I have not thought it worth while to reckon this line among the evidences for the date of the Sonnets. It may be noted that Lee says in support of his theory of an early date, "A line from a fully accredited sonnet (94) was quoted in Edward III, which was probably written before 1595" (*Life*, pp. 72, 89); and that D. thinks it more likely that the sonnet borrowed from the play. That question cannot be argued. But it needs no argument that the style of the speech in *Edward III* (II, i), if it be Shakespeare's, is much earlier than that of this sonnet.

fester, rot.

96 1-4. Some dispraise, some praise; but all agree upon the facts and all agree in loving.

3. more and less, "great and small. So in *1 Henry IV*, IV, iii, 68: The more and less came in with cap and knee" (M.).

13, 14. This final couplet is repeated from Sonnet 36. Here it is less appropriate, and the rhymes clash with those in the first quatrain.

97 5. this time removed, "this time in which I was remote or absent from thee" (M.). Cf. *Twelfth Night*, V, 92: "He grew a twenty years removed thing" (i.e., behaved as if he had been absent for twenty years).

7. prime, the springtime.

10. hope of orphans. It was the early autumn, and so the crops and fruits could as yet only be spoken of as a "hope." They would be

orphans, because in the friend's absence Summer seemed dead. For "hope of orphans" = *unborn* orphans, cf. 60. 13; "times in hope" = unborn times.

98 2. **proud-pied.** "Proud" is "gorgeous," as in Sonnet 2. 3, "youth's *proud* livery"; "pied" is parti-coloured.

4. **heavy, melancholy;** as in Sonnet 50. 1. In *Much Ado*, I, iii, 12, to be "born under Saturn" implies melancholy. Compare the adjective "saturnine."

7. "By a *summer's story* Shakespeare seems to have meant some *gay fiction*. On the other hand, in *The Winter's Tale*, he tells us 'a *sad tale* is best for *winter*.' So also in *Cymbeline*, III, iv, 12:

"if it be *summer* news,
Smile to it before: if *winterly*, thou need'st
But keep that countenance still" (M.).

8. **lap.** "So in *Richard II*, V, ii, 47:

"Who are the violets now
That strew the green *lap* of the new-come spring" (M.).

11. **They were but sweet.** There is no need to follow M. in reading "They were *my* sweet," but there is weight in his objection to the ordinary reading: "In the preceding couplet the *colour*, not the *sweetness*, of the flowers is mentioned; and in the subsequent line the words *drawn* and *pattern* relate only to their external appearance." To this, however, it is sufficient to reply that "they were but *sweet*" is a reference back to line 5; and in the following sonnet, which is an expansion of this, both sweetness and beauty are dwelt upon.

99 1. This first line is extra-metrical. It may be conjectured that we have here only a rough draft of the sonnet. The correspondence of line 1 to line 6 shows that the first line was not an afterthought; and the repetition of the reference to "breath" in line 11 suggests that Shakespeare used a quatrain already written (lines 2-5) for his passage about the violet, intending afterwards to reduce it to three lines by limiting the parallel to "complexion."

forward, spring; a constant, not a particular, epithet of the violet. Compare *Hamlet*, I, iii, 8: "a violet . . . *forward* not permanent."

6. **for,** in comparison with.

7. **buds of marjoram.** D. compares Suckling's *Tragedy of Brennoralt*, IV, i:

Hair curling and cover'd like *buds of marjoram*;
Part tied in negligence, part loosely flowing,

where "cover'd," though D. does not say so, must be a misprint for "coloured." He adds, "Mr. H. C. Hart tells me that buds of marjoram

are dark purple-red before they open, and afterwards pink; dark auburn I suppose would be the nearest approach to marjoram in the colour of hair." The passage from Suckling is, of course, only a reminiscence of this line in the sonnet, and does not take us any further. I have a bunch of half-opened marjoram before me as I write; and the colour is that of the pigment known as "brown madder." The context shows that it is the "colour," and not, as some have thought, the "shape," that is referred to.

9. one, M. for Q. "our." "The 'fear,' 'shame,' and 'despair' are poetical consequences of the imaginary theft" (Tyler).

100 1. so long, three years. See Sonnet 104. 3.

3. fury. A word borrowed from the classics, and used as by them of prophetic inspiration; as in *Othello*, III, iv, 72: "A sibyl . . . in her prophetic fury sewed the work."

9. resty, torpid; as in *Cymbeline*, III, vi, 34: "when *resty* sloth finds the down pillow hard."

101 6-8. The Muse's answer given in these quibbling lines is summarised in the next, "he needs no praise." The verbs "fix" and "lay" are borrowed from the painter's art.

6. His truth needs no praise, or "colour," because his own "colour," or beauty, sufficiently fixes it.

7. His beauty needs no artist's brush to paint and so demonstrate the truth of it.

8. The best things are best if unalloyed (here, with praise).

102 3. merchandised. Cf. 21. 14. "So in *Love's Labour's Lost*, II, i, 13:

"my beauty, though but mean,
Needs not the painted flourish of your praise:
Beauty is bought by judgment of the eye,
Not uttered by base sale of chapmen's tongues" (C.).

6. lays. Gollancz (*Temple Shakespeare*, p. xx) explains this of the *Venus* and *Lucrèce*, which were dedicated to Southampton; but the whole point of the sonnet is lost unless we refer it to the earlier sonnets.

7. summer's front, the beginning of summer. "So in *The Winter's Tale*, IV, iv, 3:

"No shepherdess, but Flora
Peering in April's front" (M.).

8. her. Q. "his," which some editors oddly retain, without changing the gender of the pronouns in the lines below. But the singing nightingale in Shakespeare is always female. Compare *Merchant of Venice*,

V, 104, "The nightingale, if *she* should sing by day," etc.; *Romeo and Juliet*, III, v, 4.

103 3. argument, theme; as in Sonnet 38. 3. The "argument" here, as there, is the friend himself.

all bare, simply by itself.

11. pass. The word usually implies an embarrassing situation, and there may be a suggestion of that sense here.

104 7. The image seems to be from throwing incense on a fire.

10. Steal. "So before, 77. 7: 'thy dial's shady *stealth*'" (M.).

his figure, its figure, that on the dial. Beauty steals away as imperceptibly as the hand of a watch steals away from the figures on the dial.

14. beauty's summer, i.e. the friend, who was to beauty as summer to the year.

105. This sonnet has no connection with the subject of the previous five sonnets.

3. Since. W. takes this to mean "My love is not idolatry, because I worship only at one shrine." But there could be monidolatry as well as monotheism. "Since" means "on the ground that." The poet says, "Let not my entire devotion to one friend be called idolatry." The reason he gives, why it is not idolatry, is that his friend is "fair, kind, and true."

106 1. wasted, past. See Sonnet 77. 2.

4. lovely. See note on Sonnet 54. 13.

5. blazon, the *description* or *proclamation* of a *coat of arms*. So in *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 312:

"I am a gentleman!" I'll be sworn thou art;
Thy tongue, thy face, thy limbs, actions, and spirit
Do give thee five-fold *blazon*.

The word is less exactly used by many modern writers for a *picture* in heraldic colour, as in Tennyson's *In Memoriam*:

The prophets *blazoned* on the panes.

It is noteworthy, in relation to the date of the Sonnets, that all the other instances of the use of the word by Shakespeare are subsequent to the application for a grant of arms in 1596.

8. master, are master of. "So in *Henry V*, II, iv, 137:

"You'll find a difference
Between the promise of his greener days
And these he *masters* now" (S.).

9. D. quotes, as from Constable's *Diana*:

Miracle of the world, I never will deny
 That former poets praise the beauty of their days;
 But all those beauties were but *figures of thy praise*,
 And all those poets did of thee but *prophecy*.

But the sonnet is not in *Diana*; it is therefore subsequent to 1594; and as the last line, "which only we without idolatry adore," looks like a reference to Shakespeare's 105th sonnet, it is most probable that Constable is quoting Shakespeare here also.

12. skill, Tyrwhitt for Q. "still." W. rejects "skill" on the ground that Shakespeare always praises the old writers, and that is true. The skill that they lacked was not the skill to sing, but to fill out the ideal from the "figures" of their own day. Their eyes were only "divining eyes," but they sang up to the full limit of their vision; we moderns, on the contrary, who see the ideal beauty, lack tongue to sing it. If we read "still," there is no noun for "enough" to refer to.

107. The most difficult of the sonnets. It presents at first sight a specious appearance of continuity with those immediately preceding; the "fears" of line 1 seeming to point back to the "fear" of 104. 13, and the "prophetic soul of the world" to the "prophecies" of 106. 9; and so D. takes it. He paraphrases: "Not my own fears that my friend's beauty may be on the wane, nor the prophetic soul of the world, prophesying in the persons of dead knights and ladies your perfections, and so prefiguring your death, can confine my lease of love to a brief term of years." But there is nothing here, as in 104, about the friend's beauty, and there is nothing in 106 about the friend's death. It is best, therefore, to construe the sonnet without regard to these links of connection, which are apparent only. Accordingly, the fears and prophecies of line 1 must be interpreted by what follows as fears and auguries of some anticipated future which would be the doom of the poet's love. In the first quatrain the fears are stated in the most general terms as fears for the future; but the second quatrain connects them with some particular crisis, which came without bringing the expected catastrophe. Instead of that it brought a happier era. Apparently the crisis feared was a civil war in which the arts would perish, since "peace" is referred to as its opposite; and the immediate result anticipated by the poet is the survival of his poems. On a supposed reference to the release of Southampton from prison, see Introduction, page xxxiii.

1. prophetic soul. "So in *Hamlet*, 'O my prophetic soul, my uncle'" (S.).

2. **wide world.** The use of this broad expression forbids us to limit the meaning of the clause to a vaguer paraphrase of the second quatrain, as though it were only Englishmen who were foreboding. The prophecy of things to come must probably be taken, with W., "as implying that they are to come in place of the things that are." Only, as Shakespeare always uses "prophetic" in a true sense, I should rather say the implication is that the "things to come" *usually* come in place of things that are. It is this usual implication that the poet denies.

3. The metaphor is from a lease which is forfeited at a fixed date.

4. **confined**, limited; as in 105, 7, 110, 12.

5. This line was taken by Massey as referring to the death of Elizabeth, and he is followed by Lee, who says "there was hardly a verse-writer who mourned her loss that did not typify it as the eclipse of a heavenly body" (*Life*, p. 148). This interpretation is confirmed by the passage in *Antony and Cleopatra* (III, xiii, 153) where it is said of the queen, "Alack, our terrene moon is now eclipsed." D. objects to this interpretation, but supplies no other explanation of "the mortal moon." Butler accepts the reference to Elizabeth, but refers the crisis to the Spanish Armada, Tyler to the revolt of Essex, Gollancz to the Peace of Vervins (1598), all on the same ground as D., that to "endure an eclipse" means to emerge from it with undimmed splendour. *Prima facie*, of course, this might be so, but the point must be settled by Shakespeare's use of language; and an examination of passages will show that an eclipse in Shakespeare's metaphorical use means a final, not a temporary, extinction. (See *1 Henry VI*, IV, v, 53; *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, xiii, 153.) It is not easy to see by what other metaphor the death of a "moon" could be described.

6. **augurs.** Those who take the "eclipse" as referring to the death of Elizabeth have no difficulty in pointing to presages of calamity; see e.g. Donne's sermon on James's accession: "When every one of you in the city were running up and down like ants, with their eggs bigger than themselves, every man with his bags to seek where to hide them safely, Almighty God shed down his spirit of unity and recollecting and reposedness and acquiescence upon you ail."

8. **olives.** "James was constantly said to have entered on his inheritance, not with an olive branch in his hand, but with a whole forest of olives round about him, for he brought not peace to this kingdom alone, but to all Europe" (Lee's *Life*, p. 148).

9. **most balmy time.** Mr. Lee points out that James came to England in a springtime of rare clemency.

10. **my love**, "my affection," not "my friend."

10. subscribes, submits. "So in *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, v, 105:

"Hector in his blaze of wrath subscribes
To tender objects" (M.).

12. insults o'er, exults, triumphs over, with a notion of haughtiness.

14. Not improbably a veiled reference to the monument that would be erected to the queen.

108 3. new . . . new, M. for Q. "new . . . now."

7, 8. Reckoning even old expressions of love as fresh, since we are just the same to each other as when I wrote my first poem to you.

9. in love's fresh case, such is love's fresh case, its state of always being fresh.

10-14. Eternal love, being always fresh, regards not the havoc wrought by age, nor yields ground before the wrinkles that must come, but, on the contrary, never sees the workings of antiquity, which is always in its rear; so it still finds the impulse to love springing fresh in the features, where considerations of age and merely outward beauty would find no such impulse.

109 2. absence, i.e. the three years during which the friends did not meet.

7. Just, precisely, and so punctual. "Justly" is still used in provincial English in such phrases as "I don't *justly* know."

exchanged, changed. So *Merchant of Venice*, II, vi, 35: "I am much ashamed of my *exchange*" (transmutation into a boy).

8. My return wipes out the offence of my absence.

11. preposterously, against nature and reason.

stained, referring back to "stain" in line 8. The poet's absence was a stain or fault, but not so preposterous a stain as desertion would have been.

110 1. gone here and there, into other society, and so been absent on many occasions from my friend.

2. motley to the view, a public jester. For "motley," see *As You Like It*, III, iii, 79: "Will you be married, motley"; and for "to the view," compare *Hamlet*, V, ii, 389: "that these bodies high on a stage be placed *to the view*." There is no reference to the poet's profession of player. The sonnet gives the confession of a favourite of society.

3. Gored mine own thoughts. "We meet with the same expression in *Hamlet*, V, ii, 261

"Till by some elder masters of known honour
I have a voice and precedent of peace
To keep my name *ungored*" (Boswell).

So also in *Troilus and Cressida*, III, iii, 228:

I see my reputation is at stake,
My fame is shrewdly *gored*.

Cf. *Twelfth Night*, III, i, 129:

Have you not set mine honour at the stake
And baited it.

From these passages it is clear that for a man's reputation to be "gored" meant that it was exposed, like a bear at the stake, for common censure. Perhaps the poet here says that he has exposed his own reputation in this way, either by writing for the stage or becoming a society jester. Or perhaps the clause means simply "I have wounded my own self-respect."

4. "Entered into new friendships and loves which were transgressions against my old love" (D.).

5. *truth* here means "fidelity"; as in Sonnets 41. 12, 54. 2, etc.

6. *strangely*, as a stranger.

7. *blenches*, starts, aberrations; frequently used as a verb; *Hamlet*, II, ii, 626: "If he *blench*, I know my course"; *Measure for Measure*, IV, v, 5: "Though sometimes you do *blench* from this to that." The lines seem to mean, These infidelities (by their failure) restored me to my old affection, for they proved the superiority of my old friend.

8. *worse essays*, "trials of worse things" (H.).

9. *have what shall have no end*, take my friendship, which shall henceforth never swerve.

10. *grind*, sharpen. He had pleaded in line 7 that his "blenches" only sharpened his appetite for his old friend.

111 x. To "chide with" means no more than to "chide." The form is found in *Othello*, IV, ii, 167; *Cymbeline*, V, iv, 32.

4. To be dependent upon the public for livelihood begets a popularity-hunting temper. I do not think, with Schmidt, that the word means "vulgar." It may perhaps mean "no better than ordinary."

5. *a brand*, a stigma of reproach. The poet knew that people who are most welcome for their talent for amusing company are not always spoken of behind their backs with respect.

6. *subdued to*, brought into conformity with. Cf. *Othello*, I, iii, 251.

10. *eisel*, vinegar. "Vinegar is esteemed very efficacious in preventing the communication of the plague and other contagious distempers" (M.).

112 4. *o'er-green*, "o'ergrieve" (S.). But the change is unnecessary, though it is not clear what particular metaphor the poet had in mind; perhaps the grassing over of a bare patch. Cf. 68. 11.

allow, approve.

7, 8. So far as I am concerned, there is no one but you alive in all the world by whom my resolute mind can be changed to right or wrong. Perhaps we should read "charges"; in that case the paraphrase would be, There is none but you from whom my mind receives charges of right or wrong. In either case "my steeled sense" is the object of the verb, and "no one" the subject.

12. To "dispense with" is to "excuse"; as in *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 175: "Nature *dispenses with* the deed so far that it becomes a virtue."

14. Q. reads, "That all the world besides me thinks y' are dead," which W. as usual defends, chiefly on the ground that the obvious emendation, "That all the world besides, me thinks, are dead," is merely a repetition of line 7, and that line 12 is clearly meant to prepare the way for a "startling declaration." "In Q. we get one." So we do, but we get a statement which in no way excuses Shakespeare's neglect of other critics or flatterers, as it professes to do. And it is not the fact that line 14 as amended merely repeats line 7. That said simply, "There is no one alive but you who can move me"; this says, "there is no one alive but you," — a climax, and a sufficiently "startling declaration."

113 1. It is not clear whether "Since I left you" refers to a new and particular absence, or to the long interval of separation.

2. the eye which directs my movements.

3. doth part his function, performs only part of its function.

5. heart, same as "mind" of lines 1 and 7.

6. latch, take hold of, M. for Q. "lack," quoting *Macbeth*, IV, iii, 195:

But I have words
That would be howl'd out in the desert air,
Where hearing should not latch them.

A "latch" is still used of the catch of a door.

14. untrue, untruth. "So in *Measure for Measure*: 'Say what you can, my false outweighs your true'" (M.).

114. The question asked in this sonnet is whether the eye deceives the mind by flattery in reporting this fresh beauty in outward nature, or whether love actually has made things more beautiful.

5. indigest, chaotic. Cf. *King John*, V, vii, 26:

You are born
To set a form upon that *indigest*
Which he hath left so shapeless and so rude.

9. D. compares *Twelfth Night*, I, v, 328:

I fear to find
Mine eye too great a flatterer for my *mind*.

11. *gust*, taste.

- 13, 14. "The allusion here is to the tasters to princes. So in *King John*, V, vi, 28:

"Who did taste to him?
A monk whose bowels suddenly burst out" (S.).

Here the mind, being the monarch (line 1), is "tasted to" by the eye. If the drink be poisoned, the eye can scarcely be blamed for administering to the mind what itself enjoys.

- 115 5. *reckoning Time*. The construction is resumed in "fearing of Time's tyranny."

7. *Tan*: so Sonnet 62, 10.

12. *Crowning*. For a similar use of the metaphor D. quotes Sonnet 107, 7: "Incertainties now *crown* themselves assured."

14. W. has successfully vindicated the Q. *full stop* at the end of the sonnet against the *interrogation* read by all modern editors except Tyler. "Love is a babe" gives the reason why the poet was *not* justified at the beginning in saying, "Now I love you best." Love, by its very nature, "still doth grow."

- 116 2. *impediments*. There is a patent reference to the language of the Church of England marriage service: "If any of you know cause or just *impediment* why these persons should not be joined together in Holy Matrimony, ye are to declare it." The impediments not admitted are "change of circumstances" (line 3) and "inconstancy" (line 4).

4. *bends*, bends its course. "To remove" is used in a slightly different sense from "with the remover." Love does not disappear when the loved one is unfaithful. For this sense, cf. Sonnet 25, 14.

5. *mark*. "So in *Coriolanus*, V, iii, 74:

"Like a great *sea-mark*, standing *every flaw*
And saving those that eye thee" (M.).

7. The wandering bark corresponds with "the remover" of line 4.

8. "The passage seems to mean, As the star, over and above what can be ascertained concerning it for our guidance at sea, has unknowable occult virtue and influence, so love, beside its power of guiding us, has incalculable potencies" (D.). On Drayton's supposed suggestion of this passage, see "A Note on Drayton's Sonnets," page 138.

- height*, elevation above the horizon, altitude.

9. Time's fool, the sport of Time. "So in *Henry IV*, V, iv, 81: 'But Thought's the slave of life, and life *Time's fool*'" (M.). In *Measure for Measure*, III, i, 11, life is called "Death's *fool*." See Sonnet 124, 13.

11. his, Time's.

12. "So in *All's Well that Ends Well*, III, iii, 5:

"We'll strive to bear it for your worthy sake
To the extreme *edge of hazard*" (M.).

117 1. scanted. So in *King Lear*, II, iv, 142: "to scant her duty."

4. The play on "bond" and "tie," if it be a play, is repeated in *Richard II*, IV, 76:

There is my *bond* of faith
To *tie* thee to my strong correction.

5. unknown minds, people of no interest or importance. Schmidt explains, "Such as I should be ashamed to mention," quoting also *Richard III*, I, ii, 218: "For divers *unknown* reasons, I beseech you grant me this boon," where "unknown" means "such as I must not tell." But it probably means simply "insignificant." See the passage from *2 Henry IV* quoted on 118. 12.

6. time. See note on 70 6.

11-14. If you are *levelling* at me these accusations, still do not shoot, because my motive was to try your constancy.

118. This sonnet says that the poet's unfaithfulness had two motives, to make return sweeter and to prevent satiety.

2. eager, bitter (line 6). "So in *Hamlet*, I, v, 69: 'and curd like *eager* droppings into milk'" (M.).

5. ne'er-cloying. The epithet explains why this "policy in love" was mistaken.

10. The ills that were not, i.e. satiety, which had not come.

11-14. Would-be policy brought a state of health, which it considered *too* healthy, to be physicked, expecting it to be cured by such ill means; but it found that drugs in that sort of sickness were poison.

12. rank of goodness. Cf. *Hamlet*, IV, vii, 118: "goodness growing to a plurisy." "Rank" was an epithet used of a state of body which required blood-letting; as in *Julius Caesar*, III, i, 152: "Who else must be let blood; who else is rank." D. quotes an excellent parallel from a medical passage in *2 Henry IV*, IV, i, 64: "To diet rank minds sick of happiness"; on which, see Introduction, page xxvi.

119 1. The Siren would seem to be the lady of the sonnets in the Appendix. Cf. with line 2, Sonnet 147. 14.

2. limbecks, alembics, i.e. stills.

4. "Either losing in the very moment of victory, or gaining victories (of other loves than those of his friend) which were indeed but losses" (D.). The contrast of line 5 with line 6 shows that the latter is the more probable sense.

7. "How have mine eyes started from their hollows in the fever-fits of my disease" (D.). "We meet in *Hamlet* (I, v, 17) the same image as here, 'Make thy two eyes, like stars, start from their spheres'" (S.). See Introduction, page xxvi.

11. "Note the introduction of the metaphor of rebuilt love, reappearing in later sonnets" (D.). M. quotes for the metaphor *The Comedy of Errors*, III, ii, 4; *Antony and Cleopatra*, III, ii, 29; *Troilus and Cressida*, IV, ii, 109.

120 1-4. The emphatic words are "you" in line 1 and "my" in line 3.

6. a hell of time. "So in *Othello*, III, iii, 169:

"But oh, what *damned minutes* tells he o'er,
Who dotes, yet doubts, suspects, yet strongly loves.

and *Lucrece*, 1287:

"And that deep torture may be called a *hell*
Where more is felt than one has power to tell" (M.).

9. our: Q., which is impossible, as it spoils the antithesis of "you" and "me," which runs all through the sonnet. The "night of woe" refers back to "I by yours." Emendation is difficult because it is uncertain whether "that" is demonstrative or conjunctive. I incline to the former supposition, as the effect of the line seems purposely repeated below in line 13, and, if so, we may accept Staunton's conjecture of "sour," or read "one" (from the "once" in the preceding line), — "that one night of woe. . . ." If "that" is a conjunction, I can only suggest "your" for "our"; and suppose that the poet means, "Would that in some mystical way your night of woe had communicated itself to my deepest [subliminal] sense, and reminded it," etc. For the misprint "our" for "one," cf. 99. 9.

remember'd, reminded.

121 1-4. It is better to be vile, when although not vile we incur the reproach of vileness; because else we are the poorer by a pleasure, which is the vileness they mean, though, maybe, we should not so reckon it.

3. just, legitimate; so deemed, deemed vile.

6. Give salutation to, affect, stir, and so, infect. Schmidt refers to *Henry VIII*, II, iii, 103:

Would I had no being
If this *salute* my blood a jot.

8. wills. good pleasures. Perhaps with a reference also to the bad sense of the word; as in 134, etc.

9. level, aim; as in 117. 11.

11. bevel. oblique.

12. Compare 69. 10.

14. I have marked the whole line as the theory of the "spies." But the sense of "reign" is not clear. Schmidt explains it as "exult." Perhaps it means "what makes 'kings of men' is but a higher degree of badness." The sonnet cannot be aimed at the Puritans, but at "the world," which puts the worst possible construction upon conduct.

122. An apology for giving away a table-book received from his friend. See Sonnet 77.

1, 2. tables, tablets, memorandum book; character'd, inscribed, as in Sonnet 108. 1. "So in *Hamlet*, I, v, 98:

"from the *table of my memory*
I'll wipe away all trivial fond records:
And thy commandment all alone shall live
Within the book and volume of my *brain*;

again in the same play (I, iii, 59):

"And these few precepts in thy *memory*
See thou *character*;

again in *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, II, vii, 3:

"I do conjure thee
Who art the *table* wherein all my thoughts
Are visibly *character'd* and engrav'd" (M.).

The idea of the passage seems to be, Thy *true* gift of tables is safe in my brain, where its leaves are covered with the writing of memory, and are immortal; the other I gave away.

3. that idle rank, that useless series of leaves, or, as D., "that poor dignity (of tables written upon with pen or pencil)."

5, 6. "So in *Hamlet*, I, v, 96: "Remember thee?

Ay, thou poor ghost, while memory holds a seat
In this distracted globe" (S.).

9. That poor retention, "the table-book given to him by his friend, incapable of retaining, or rather of containing, so much as the tablet of the brain" (M.).

10. tallies, sticks on which notches or scores are cut to keep accounts by. Schmidt, who quotes also *2 Henry VI*, IV, vii, 39: "Our forefathers had no other books but the score and the tally."

13. adjunct, attendant.

123. The thought of this sonnet is that all things subject to time are also subject to change; and the poet will only admire what is changeless; hence he spends no admiration on either the recorded wonders of the past or the visible wonders of the present. "There is no new thing under the sun."

2. The new pyramids are any modern marvels which seem to defy change; these only remind the poet of pyramids that are decayed. For "pyramid" in this general sense, compare *Macbeth*, IV, i, 57: "Though palaces and pyramids do slope."

5, 6. An expansion of line 4. We are so short-lived that we take for novelty what is really a new dressing of what is old.

7, 8. We regard the wonderful works of to-day as the offspring of our own will, and forget that past ages have produced the very same.

7. born to our desire. Q. "borne."

11. doth lie, tells lies; singular by attraction to the second subject, "what we see." The lie is the assertion of real existence.

12. So far from being changeless, all the works of Time, past and present, grow and decay as he passes on his rapid course. But for all that, there is such a thing as eternal truth, and "I will be true."

124 1. state, circumstances of nature or fortune, explained by "accident" in line 5. D. explains, "born of place and power and pomp"; but "pomp" in line 6 is only one alternative "state."

2. unfathered, "without a true father," being begotten by Time upon Fortune, and so subject to his caprices. A bastard was "filius nullius."

4. "My love might be subject to Time's hate and so plucked up as a weed, or subject to Time's love and so gathered as a flower" (D.).

7, 8. This sonnet, like Sonnet 107, has obvious allusions to political affairs of the day. I suspect the main reference here is to the Jesuit intrigues, "the blow of thrall'd discontent" being the Powder Plot.

7. thrall'd discontent, the discontent of a party held down by penal enactments.

9. policy, that heretic. If "policy" has a side allusion to the Guy Fawkes plot, there is special point in the epithet "heretic" as a *paraprodokian*.

10. The connection is with "policy," not with "heretic." Policy, whether in love or public affairs, allows men but a short lease of time; whereas Love is eternal.

11. Perhaps the metaphor of line 5 is recalled ; a friendship like the poet's is a great building, like the Houses of Parliament, only not subject to such dangers. But the next line, if the reading is correct, makes this interpretation doubtful. The image is rather of a great tree which neither sunshine nor storm can affect and which cannot be cut down. See note on line 12.

highly politic, vastly wise and prescient. "Love in itself is infinitely prudent, prudent to eternity" (S.). The word "politic" is used here in a good sense ; most commonly in Shakespeare the meaning is bad, as in line 9. Compare *As You Like It*, V, iv, 46: "I have been *politic* with my friend"; *Timon*, III, iii, 29: "The devil knew not what he did when he made man *politic*"; *Hamlet*, V, i, 86: "A politician; one that would circumvent God."

12. grows. Staunton proposed "glows." If line 12 is meant to be parallel to line 6, we want instead of "grows" a word to repeat "suffers," such as "droops," which alliteration suggests. For the printer's error of *g* for *d*, cf. 144. 6, *sight* for *side*.

13, 14. I believe the allusion here is to the Jesuit conspirators whose object in life was to murder the king, and who when caught posed as martyrs for the faith. Such inconstancy of principle would justify the poet in calling them "the fools of time" and pointing his moral with them. The moral is that "Love is the only true policy."

fools of time. See note on 116. 9.

125 1. Were't, "would it be." Commentators have ignored the fact that the verb here is conditional ; and so they have not seen that the poet is repudiating charges laid against him by the "informer" of line 13. The charges are of caring too much for his friend's beauty and laying upon that a basis for eternity. To which he replies in the second quatrain that so far from this being the case, his own experience of others has shown him that such conduct leads only to disaster.

bore the canopy: a symbol of outward honour, — canopies being carried over royal persons in processions.

2. extern . . . outward. "Thus in *Othello*, I, i, 63:

"When my *outward* action doth demonstrate
The native act and figure of my heart
In compliment *extern*" (S.).

On the inference as to the probable date of the sonnet, see Introduction, page xxvii.

5. dwellers on form and favour, admirers of beauty only in form and face.

6. Lose all, and more, "cease to love and through satiety even grow to dislike" (D.).

8. Their love was a mere matter of "gazing," and so it was all expense without return, which is "pitiful thriving," i.e. bad business.

9. obsequious, officious, devoted.

11. seconds. The word "oblation" suggested the simplest form of offering in the Levitical code, — a cake of meal; and this suggested the use of the word "seconds," which, as S. first pointed out, is "flour of inferior quality." The poet means that his affection contains no baser elements.

13. suborn'd informer. This is the false witness, of course imaginary, in the contest between the poet and Time, who brings the charge in lines 1-4. D. refers the word back to the "spies" of 121. 7, but suggests as an alternative that it may be Jealousy, who in *Venus and Adonis* is called "sour informer" (because it whispers suspicions to the mind). But neither suggestion has any relevancy here. W. takes the informer to be "some person whose identity was obvious to the object of Shakespeare's verse"; and B. takes him to be the poet's friend himself, naïvely adding that he does not see how to reconcile the concluding couplet with what precedes.

126. This envoy to the first section of the Sonnets consists of six rhymed couplets. Q. marks the poem as defective, but unnecessarily.

2. sickle-hour. Sidney Walker for Q. "sickle, hour." The idea is that when "the hour is come" the sickle strikes. Cf. *1 Henry IV*, V, ii, 85:

If life did ride upon a dial's point,
Still ending at the arrival of an hour.

3. by waning grown. See Sonnet 11. 1:

As fast as thou shalt *wane*, so fast thou *grow'st*
In one of thine.

But here the idea is different. By the process, which would ordinarily be "waning" (i.e. becoming older), the boy has "grown" in beauty.

4. lovers withering. The growing beauty of the boy shows up the ageing of his friends. Delius conjectured "lover's" in the singular, which may be right, as the first line has "*my* lovely boy."

8. The skill of Nature in preserving the boy's beauty is a reproach to the power of Time, and may be said to "kill" his "minutes," as it robs them of their influence.

10. detain, but not still keep, hold back for a while, but not keep always.

12. *quietus*. So in *Hamlet*, III, i, 75:

When he himself might his *quietus* make,
With a bare bodkin.

"*Quietus*" is for *quietus est*, the technical term in an acquittance. "The accompt of Iohn Tayler and Iohn Shakspeyr . . . is thus acquitted: Et sic *quieti sunt* Iohannes Tayler et Iohannes Shakspeyr" (W., quoting Halliwell-Phillips, *Outlines*, II, 224).

Everything is due to Time; accordingly Nature cannot secure her discharge at the audit as long as she holds anything back. To obtain her "*quietus*" she must surrender "thee."

127 1. "The reader will find almost all that is said here on the subject of complexion is repeated in *Love's Labour's Lost*, IV, iii, 256" (S.) The word "fair" means both light complexioned and "beautiful."

9. brows, Staunton for Q. "eyes."

11. no beauty lack, etc., possess themselves of artificial beauty and so slander nature by their pretension.

13. becoming of, gracing. The "of" is superfluous, as after many transitive verbs.

128 5. jacks, keys of the virginal. Strictly, they were the pieces of wood which held the quills by which the strings were plucked.

11. thy, M. for Q. "their."

129 1. expense, expenditure. "The expense of spirits" was a technical term in medicine.

9. mad, M. for Q. "made."

10. extreme, as in line 4, immoderate, violent.

11. proved, a very woe, M. for Q. "proud and very wo."

130. A less pleasant variation on the *motif* of Sonnet 21.

14. she. Compare Crashaw, *On his Supposed Mistress*: "Whoe'er she be, the not impossible 'she.'"

131 1. so as thou art, being, as thou art, black and not beautiful.

14. It is because of black deeds, not of black complexion, that the slander referred to in lines 5 and 6 arises.

132 2. torments, Q. 1640. The "s" had dropped in the first Q.

12. suit: probably not "clothe" (D.), but "adapt," "fit."

133. This sonnet treats, from the woman's point of view, the same subject as Sonnets 34, 35, 40-42.

6. my next self, my friend.

8. cross'd. The same idea is found in 34. 12 and in 42. 12.

10. bail, set free by becoming security for.

134 1. See 133. 14.

2. See 133. 10.

3. that other mine, that other who is mine.

7. "This suggests that the friend came under the fascination of the poet's mistress in discharging some office of kindness or civility to her on the poet's behalf" (W.).

9. statute. "Statute has here its legal signification, that of a security or obligation for money" (M.).

11. a friend came, a friend who became.

12. my unkind abuse, this unkind ill-treatment of me.

135 1. will. On the play upon the proper names in this sonnet and in 136 and 143, see Introduction, page xxxvi. For the jingle between "wish" and "will," compare *Two Gentlemen*, I, iii, 63: "My *will* is something sorted with his *wish*." For "will" in the sense of carnal desire, to which there seems a reference in line 5, compare *Lear*, IV, vi, 278: "O undistinguished space of woman's *will*." D. suggests that "will" in line 1 may refer to the lady's husband; the Q. prints it in italics, like the "Will"s in line 2, and it has been conjectured from 136. 2 that the husband's name was "Will." But if "will" in line 1 were a proper name, we should expect in line 4 "thy sweet wills."

9. "Compare *Twelfth Night*, II, iv, 103; I, i, 11" (D.).

13. "Let no unkindness kill *any* beseechers." For the adjective used as a noun, cf. "fair" (16. 11, etc.). D.'s suggestion, "Let no unkind 'no'" (i.e. no unkind refusal), is ingenious; but the next line, "Think *all* but one," seems to require "*no* fair beseechers."

136 1. check, reprove.

2. thy 'Will,' perhaps "thy husband Will," or "my friend." But the third line renders the conjecture unnecessary. "Will" in lines 3 and 5 means carnal desire. Cf. *Lucretia*, 495:

But will is deaf and hears no heedful friends,
Only he hath an eye to gaze on Beauty,
And dotes on what he looks, 'gainst law and duty.

9. See note on Sonnet 8. 13. "The same conceit is found in *Romeo and Juliet*, I, ii, 33:

"Search among view of many; mine being *one*
May stand in *number*, though in *reckoning* none" (S.).

Capulet is there speaking of his daughter with paternal depreciation. The poet here makes the distinction with the opposite sense; he need not be counted, but must be reckoned with.

10. store, property, abundance; as in 37. 8, 64. 8, 84. 3, 135. 10; "used only in the singular; therefore in 136. 10 *store's*, not *stores*' as modern editors" (Schmidt).

12. a something, sweet. The commas were suggested by S. Walker. See line 4, above.

14. There is the same doubt as in line 2 whether the reading should be "Will" or "will." Q. reads *Will* in both cases.

137. This sonnet accuses Love of perverting first the eyes and then the judgment.

6. anchor'd. "The same metaphor is found in *Antony and Cleopatra*, I, v, 33:

"great Pompey
Would stand and make his *eyes* grow in my brow;
There would he *anchor his aspect*" (D.).

9, 10. A "several" was that part of common land which was allotted to individuals. Compare Maria's quip in *Love's Labour's Lost*, II, 223: "My lips are no *common*, though *several* they be"; to which Boyet replies, "Belonging to whom?"

138. This sonnet is also (with some variations) in *The Passionate Pilgrim*, a collection of verses printed as Shakespeare's in 1599. It there stands thus:

When my love swears that she is made of truth
I do believe her, though I know she lies,
That she might think me some untutor'd youth
Unskilful in the world's false *forgeries*.
Thus vainly thinking that she thinks me young,
Although *I know my years be* past the best,
I smiling credit her false-speaking tongue,
Outfacing faults in love with love's ill rest.
But wherefore says *my love* that she is *young*?
And wherefore say not I that I am old?
O, love's best habit is a *soothing tongue*,
And age, in love, loves not to have years told.
Therefore *I'll lie with love and love with me*,
Since that our faults in love thus smother'd be.

It is interesting to have so clear an example of Shakespeare's rewriting. It will be noted that the amended copy gets rid of the difficult conclusion to line 8, and also of the new idea in line 9, which interferes with the statement of the two faults in the octave: viz. the woman's inconstancy and the man's pretence of youth and innocence.

140 6. to tell me so, "to tell me, thou *dost* love me" (M.).

11. ill-wresting, "misinterpreting to disadvantage" (Schmidt).

14. Compare 139. 6. "That is, as it is expressed in a former sonnet (93): Thy looks with me, *thy heart in other place*" (M.).

141. 6. I follow Q. against modern editors, including W., in reading no comma after "feeling." The poet says that his delicate feeling is not "prone to base touches," not that it is.

9. "The 'wits,' Dr. Johnson observes, seem to have been reckoned five, by analogy to the five senses. From Stephen Hawes's poem called *Grande Amour and La Bell Pucel* (1554) it appears that the five wits were *common wit, imagination, fantasy, estimation, and memory*" (M.). Tennyson speaks of the owl "warming his *five wits*."

11. Who, i.e. the heart. The heart by ceasing to rule leaves the man a mere "likeness."

14. pain, punishment.

142 2. "You hate my love, not because it is sinful, but because you love, sinfully, elsewhere" (W.).

6. scarlet ornaments. "The same expression is found in *King Edward III* (1596):

"when she grew pale
His cheeks put on their *scarlet ornaments*" (M.).

The parallel would suggest that this is an early sonnet, and the writing confirms the suggestion.

7. false bonds of love, false kisses. M. quotes the song in *Measure for Measure*, IV, i, 5:

But my kisses bring again,
Seals of love, but sealed in vain;

and *Venus and Adonis*, 511:

Pure *lips*, sweet *seals* in my soft lips imprinted,
What bargains may I make, still to be sealing.

13. hide, hide from me, refuse. So in *As You Like It*, I, i, 73: "You have trained me like a peasant, obscuring and *hiding* from me all gentleman-like qualities."

143 8. Not prizing, disregarding.

13. 'Will.' Q. prints *Will* in italics, and it is certain from the sonnet which follows that a play is intended upon the name of the poet's friend. S., whose acumen deserts him when he annotates the Sonnets, which he despised, says: "The image with which this sonnet begins is at once pleasing and natural; but the conclusion of it is lame and impotent indeed. We attend to the cries of the infant, but laugh at the loud blubberings of the great boy *Will*." If "Will" is interpreted of

the "babe," the sonnet loses all point. As to the "blubberings of the great boy," the sonnet is no doubt intended to be only half serious, like the one that follows.

144. "This sonnet was printed in *The Passionate Pilgrim* (1599) with some slight variations" (M.). They are noted below. On its relation to Drayton's sonnet, "An evil spirit your beauty haunts me still," see "A Note on Drayton's Sonnets," page 137.

2. which. *P. P.* reads "that."

suggest, not necessarily "tempt," but "whisper advice," whether good or bad; as in *Merry Wives*, III, iii, 230: "What spirit, what devil suggests this imagination?" The word is more often used in a bad sense; as in *Richard II*, III, iv, 75: "What Eve, what serpent, hath suggested thee."

3. 4. the . . . the. *P. P.* reads "my . . . my."

6. side, M. for Q. "sight," quoting *P. P.*

8. foul. *P. P.* reads "fair," the only important variation, but clearly a blunder.

11. from me, away from me. *P. P.* reads "to me."

13. Yet this shall I ne'er know. *P. P.* reads "The truth I shall not know."

14. The reference here, which the Elizabethans thought jocular, is made plainer by *Henry IV*, II, iv, 365, quoted by D.

145. An occasional sonnet, having no connection with the series. It is in octosyllabic measure. There is no reason to doubt its Shakespearean authorship. "We have the same kind of expression in *Lucrece*, 1534-1537:

"'It cannot be,' quoth she, 'that so much guile'
She would have said, 'can lurk in such a look';
But Tarquin's shape came in her mind the while
And from her tongue 'can lurk' from 'cannot' took" (M.).

146 1. centre. Compare *Merchant of Venice*, V, i, 65:

Such harmony is in immortal souls;
But whilst this muddy vesture of decay
Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

2. The Q. reads "*My sinful earth* these rebel powers that thee array."

"It is manifest that the compositor inadvertently repeated the last three words of the first verse in the beginning of the second, omitting two syllables. What the omitted word or words were it is impossible now to determine" (M.). The difficulty is increased by the uncertainty

of what was the image in the poet's mind. It seems at first to be that of a castle besieged by rebels; as in *Lucrece*, 722:

She says, her subjects with foul insurrection
Have battered down her consecrated wall;

then it changes to that of a mansion with an improvident householder. If "array" can mean "hem in like a besieging army," we could read equally well "Lord of" (H.), or "Thrall to" (anon.), or "Starv'd by" (S.). W. follows Massey in reading "My sinful earth, these rebel powers array," quoting for the repetition 142. 1, 2; 90. 1, 2; *Venus and Adonis*, 963, 964; but in none of these passages is there repetition of more than a single word, and the words "*that thee array*" in Q. are thus unaccounted for.

array. Murray quotes examples of the word with the sense of "trouble," "afflict"; e.g. c. 1600, "Vice, which hath him so encumbered and *arrayed*," which would give good sense here.

4. W. quotes from *Macbeth*, V, v, 1: "Hang out our banners on the *outward walls*"; and there seems reason to suppose that this idea was in the poet's mind, but that he modified the expression in order to suit the human body rather than the castle with which he was comparing it; and also to prepare for what was coming.

10. **aggravate**, make heavier, — a curious use of the word. Daniel has (*Civil Wars*, ii, 16):

To *aggravate* thine own affliction's store.

11. **terms**, periods; as in 92. 2. **terms** divine, eternity.

13, 14. By withdrawing food from what dies and so diminishing the diet of death we are said to "feed on death."

147 7, 8. I, whose condition is grown desperate, find by experience that for desire (i.e. love) to refuse the physic of reason means death.

9. So in *Love's Labour's Lost*, V, ii, 28: "Great reason; for past cure is still past care." It was a proverbial saying. See Holland's *Leaguer*, a pamphlet published in 1632: "She has got this *adage* in her mouth: *Things past cure, past care*" (M.).

13, 14. See Steevens's note on 127. 1.

148 4. **censures**, judges; as in *Julius Caesar*, III, ii, 16: "*Censure* me in your wisdom."

8. "Shakespeare seems to intend a pun on eye and ay" (Lettsom). If so, it is impossible to make it evident in reading, for the pun requires two inconsistent punctuations. Probably the pun belongs to the second "eye" in line 9, and line 8 should read,

Love's "ay" is not so true as all men's "no."

The punctuation, however, of Q., which is given in the text, is so unusually precise that I have not ventured to change it.

149 2. *partake*, take part. "A *partaker* was in Shakespeare's time the term for an *associate* or *confederate* in any business" (M.). It is found in *1 Henry VI*, II, iv, 100: "For your *partaker* Pole and you yourself, I'll note you."

4. *all-tyrant, for thy sake*. Q. has no comma, and W. defends the Q. reading; "the plain sense," he says, "is 'I forget myself, a tyrant to myself for your sake.'" But this paraphrase omits "all," which has no force as applied to the poet.

150 2. With *insufficiency*, notwithstanding, or even by virtue of, defects. See 149. 11.

5. *becoming*, grace; as in *Antony and Cleopatra*, I, iii, 96:

my *becomings* kill me, when they do not
Eye well to you.

For the sentiment, M. compares in the same play, II, ii, 243:

vilest things
Become themselves in her.

7. *warrantise*, warranty. The form occurs in *Hamlet*, V, i, 250.

152 3. The breach of "new faith" is in vowing "new hate" to the poet. There is no reference (as W.) to breaking off the intrigue with the friend.

11, 12. To make thee appear "bright" (147. 13) I gave over my eyes to blindness, or at any rate made them forswear themselves.

13. I, Sewell for Q. "eye."

153. "This and the following sonnet are composed of the very same thoughts differently versified. They seem to have been early essays of the poet, who perhaps had not determined which he should prefer. He hardly could have intended to send them both into the world" (M.). The sonnets have been traced by Hertzberg to an epigram by Marianus in the *Palatine Anthology* (ix, 627). D. adds that "it had been translated into Latin: *Selecta Epigrammata*, Basel, 1529, and again several times before the close of the sixteenth century." I give the Greek original and English version from Mackail's *Select Epigrams from the Greek Anthology* (Longmans, 1890, page 191):

Τᾷδ' ὑπὸ τὰς πλατάνους ἀπαλῶ τετρυμένος ὕπνῳ
εὐδεν Ἔρως, Νύμφαις λαμπάδα παρθέμενος·
Νύμφαι δ' ἀλλήλῃσι· τί μέλλομεν; αἶθε δὲ τούτῳ
σβέσσαμεν, εἶπον, ὁμοῦ πῦρ κραδίης μερῶπων.

Λαμπὰς δ' ὥς ἔφλεξε καὶ ὕδατα, θερμὸν ἐκεῖθεν
 Νύμφαι Ἑρωτιάδες λουτροχοεῦσιν ὕδωρ.

Here beneath the plane-trees, overborne by soft sleep, Love slumbered, giving his torch to the Nymphs' keeping; and the Nymphs said one to another, "Why do we delay? and would that with this we might have quenched the fire in the heart of mortals." But now, the torch having kindled even the waters, the amorous Nymphs pour hot water thence into the bathing pool.

6. dateless, eternal.

11. bath. "Query, whether we shall read *Bath* (i.e. the city of that name). The following words seem to authorise it" (S.). There is undoubtedly a reference to the Bath waters, for the Greek original says nothing about curative powers.

154 13. this by that I prove, by that fact I prove this, that Love's fire, etc.

A NOTE ON THE SONNETS OF MICHAEL DRAYTON

"To Drayton he was especially indebted." — Lee's *Life of Shakespeare*, p. 110.

The sentence which I have transcribed above as the text for this appendix, together with the long footnote attached to it, requires, in my judgment, a careful reconsideration in the light of a more exact study of Drayton's sonnets. To begin with, I entirely dissent from the view taken in the following sentence, of Drayton's manner of working: "Internal evidence suggests that all but one or two of Drayton's sonnets were written by him in 1594, in the full tide of the sonneteering craze. Almost all were doubtless in circulation in manuscript then, although only fifty-three were published in 1594."

I have personally known only one poet who built up a series of sonnets by gradual accretion in Drayton's manner, and certainly he did not write them all in the first year and then issue a few at a time, keeping the rest by him. I find it hard to believe that any poet could exercise any such self-repression. Even if additions might be accounted for on this heroic theory, it would hardly cover substitutions. Five years after Drayton's first batch of sonnets appeared, he suppressed twenty of them and added thirty others. Surely the right conclusion is the obvious one, that these new sonnets were written during the interval, and seemed to the poet better than those which they replaced. But Mr. Lee speaks of "internal evidence." The only sonnet I know, not dedicatory, which bears its date on its face, is one referring to the accession of James and the Spanish peace, and this was printed without delay in the 1605 collection. Can Mr. Lee have had in mind the suggestion made by Mr. Oliver Elton in his useful monograph, that Drayton's fine sonnet, "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," first published in 1610, refers to the marriage of Anne Goodere as long before as 1595? This Anne Goodere was the daughter of

Drayton's first patron, and Mr. Fleay¹ has established beyond question that she is the lady whom in so many of his poems Drayton celebrates under the name of Idea.² There need be no doubt that the sonnets which Drayton published in 1594, calling them *Idea's Mirrour*, were inscribed to this lady, as they possibly were all written in her honour; but it does not follow that every sonnet subsequently addressed to Idea was addressed to Anne Goodere. A bachelor poet may be excused for an occasional shifting of his ideal, especially after the marriage of its first incarnation. And, *a priori* reasoning apart, we know that a sonnet addressed in 1603 "to the Lady L. S." was in 1619 included among the sonnets to Idea. This one fact, it seems to me, precludes us from founding any argument as to the early date of the sonnet "Since there's no help" upon a supposed necessary reference to Anne Goodere. And the probability of a poet's suppressing his best sonnet for five and twenty years is so small as to be negligible.

Assuming, then, that Mr. Lee will not confute me on the threshold by a demonstration that "almost all" Drayton's sonnets were circulating in 1594, I proceed to show that internal evidence rather suggests that the order of the publication of these sonnets was the actual order of their writing; and, if that is allowed, it will be seen to follow that Drayton borrowed from Shakespeare, and not Shakespeare from Drayton. The reader of Drayton's sonnets in the order of their publication is struck by two very remarkable changes of style. Drayton began to write sonnets in the manner of Daniel; then he passed from this style to that of Sidney; finally he adopted, so far as he could, the style of Shakespeare.

I. The sonnets of Samuel Daniel were first printed in 1591 in an appendix to Nash's edition of *Astrophel and Stella*, and an enlarged edition was published separately in the year following. In 1594 appeared Drayton's volume called *Idea's Mirrour: Amours in Quatorzains*. In an introductory sonnet Drayton announces that his

¹ *Biographical Chronicle*, I, 146.

² By Idea, Drayton means not an idea in our sense of the word, an abstraction, but a realised ideal.

See his "Hymn to his Lady's Birthplace":

Idea, in which name I hide
Her in my heart deified,
She in whom the virtues came
In woman's shape.

poems "have long slept in sable night," but that they are genuinely his own.

I wrong not other men,
Nor traffic further than this happy clime,
Nor filch from *Portes*, nor from *Petrarch's* pen —
A fault too common in this latter time.
Divine Sir Philip, I vouch thy writ,
"I am no pick-purse of another's wit."

Drayton was quite sure that no one who read his sonnets could accuse him of copying Sidney, and so he boldly quotes from him. His line about Desportes would seem, in the light of Mr. Lee's researches, to have been levelled at Daniel, who was, nevertheless, beyond possibility of doubt, his master in the art of writing sonnets. In saying this I am not attaching importance to the use of identical words and phrases, such as "sweet maid," "authentic," "smoke," etc., though I believe Drayton took them from Daniel; I look to the whole style of the sonnets, which is closely modelled upon Daniel's. Look, for example, at Drayton's first sonnet:

Read here, sweet maid, the story of my woe,
The dreary abstracts of my endless cares,
With my life's sorrow interlined so;
Smok'd with my sighs, and blotted with my tears:
The sad memorials of my miseries,
Penned in the grief of mine afflicted ghost,
My life's complaint in doleful elegies,
With so pure love as time could never boast.
Receive the incense which I offer here,
By my strong faith ascending to thy fame,
My zeal, my hope, my vows, my praise, my prayer,
My soul's oblations to thy sacred name:
Which name my Muse to highest heaven shall raise,
By chaste desire, true love, and virtue's praise.

With this compare Daniel's 47th (39th in first edition):

Read in my face a volume of despairs,
The wailing Iliads of my tragic woe:
Drawn with my blood and painted with my cares,
Wrought by her hand that I have honour'd so.
Who whilst I burn, she sings at my soul's wrack,
Looking aloft from turret of her pride:
There my soul's tyrant joys her in the sack
Of her own seat, whereof I made her guide.

There do these smokes that from affliction rise,
 Serve as an incense to a cruel Dame :
 A sacrifice thrice grateful to her eyes,
 Because their power serves to exact the same.
 Thus ruins she to satisfy her will
 The Temple where her name was honoured still.

No ingenuity is required to prove that one of these sonnets is modelled on the other, and, as Daniel has by three years the advantage in date of publication, Drayton must be held the copyist. Neither sonnet is among the best in their respective volumes, but each is typical of its author's manner, and the manners are identical. A more favourable example of Drayton's Danielesque manner is his sonnet to the river Ankor, on which stood Polesworth, the home of the Gooderes :

Clear Ankor, on whose silver-sanded shore
 My soul-shrin'd saint, my fair *Idca*, lies ;
 O blessed brook, whose milk-white swans adore
 That crystal stream refined by her eyes ;
 Where sweet myrrh-breathing zephyr in the spring
 Gently distils his nectar-dropping showers ;
 Where nightingales in Arden sit and sing
 Amongst those dainty dew-empowered flowers.
 Say thus, fair brook, when thou shalt see thy Queen :
 Lo, here thy shepherd spent his wandering years,
 And in these shades, dear nymph, he oft hath been,
 And here to thee he sacrificed his tears.
 Fair *Arden*, thou my *Tempe* art alone,
 And thou, sweet *Ankor*, art my *Helicon*.

II. In 1599, at the end of a reprint of his *Heroical Epistles*, Drayton issued a second collection of sonnets, fifty-nine in number, omitting many of the previous fifty-three and adding thirty new ones.¹ These new sonnets display a new influence, that of Sir Philip Sidney. It is not easy to characterise the two styles in words, but no one could for a moment, apart from the difference in metrical form, mistake a sonnet of Sidney's for one of Daniel's. Sidney employs a line of swift simplicity, with little ornament, while Daniel's line is slow, sometimes a little sluggish, often *précieux*. Sidney seems to write his sonnets at a jet, foreseeing the end from the beginning; while Daniel's are too often wanting in unity, and look as if the parts had been more considered than the whole. Again, Sidney's tricks of manner are quite

¹ Mr. Lee says *six* (page 110). I am ill at these numbers, but I think my reckoning must be nearer the mark than Mr. Lee's.

unlike Daniel's. He writes often in a low conversational key, almost buttonholing in its intimacy; he is fond of questions; he repeats emphatic words within the line, — all which marks are conspicuous in the 1599 sonnets of Drayton. Take the first for a specimen:

My heart was slain, and none but you and I:
 Who should I think the murther should commit?
 Since, but yourself, there was no creature by,
 But only I, guiltless of murdering it.
 It slew itself; the verdict on the view
 Do quit the dead, and me not accessory.
 Well, well, I fear it will be prov'd by you,
 The evidence so great a proof doth carry.
 But O see, see, we need inquire no further;
 Upon your lips the scarlet drops are found,
 And in your eye the boy that did the murther,
 Your cheeks yet pale, since first he gave the wound.
 By this I see, however things be past,
 Yet Heaven will still have murther out at last.

Undoubtedly Sidney's manner is not so well caught as Daniel's; we have the posturing of the sibyl with too little of her inspiration, but there can be no doubt as to the effort to catch it. To make sure, take another example:

You cannot love, my pretty Heart, and why?
 There was a time you told me that you would,
 But now again you will the same deny,
 If it might please you, would to God you could;
 What, will you hate? Nay, that you will not neither,
 Nor love, nor hate, how then? What will you do?
 What, will you keep a mean, then, betwixt either?
 Or will you love me, and yet hate me too?
 Yet serves not this. What next, what other shift?
 You will and will not. What a coil is here!
 I see your craft now, I perceive your drift,
 And all this while I was mistaken there;
 Your love and hate is this, I now do prove you,
 You love in hate, by hate to make me love you.

There are two sonnets "To the Reader" prefixed to the 1599 edition, on which a word may be spent. The first has been a little unkindly subpœnaed by Mr. Lee for the defence of his theory that the Elizabethan sonneteer did not even affect to be in earnest. On that I have already spoken in the Introduction, page xxiii.

The other introductory sonnet is interesting for the place of honour given to the name of Sidney, expressing Drayton's deliberate judgment at the moment :

Many there be excelling in this kind,
Whose well-trick'd rimes with all invention swell;
Let each commend, as best shall like his mind,
Some *Sidney*, *Constable*, some *Daniel*.

It is interesting also for the absence of any reference to Drayton's third and greatest master.

III. The influence of Shakespeare is already discernible in one or two sonnets of the 1599 volume, such as "An evil spirit your beauty haunts me still,"¹ "Some misbelieving and profane in love," and "To nothing better can I thee compare"; but in the sonnets of 1605 and 1619 it is the paramount influence. One sonnet added in 1602 deserves particular notice as marking the transition from Drayton's second to his third manner. It is plainly written under Sidneian inspiration, and might indeed almost pass for Sidney's; and yet it has several of the outward marks of the Shakespearean sonnet.

Dear, why should you command me to my rest,
When now the night doth summon all to sleep?
Methinks this time becometh lovers best;
Night was ordained together friends to keep.
How happy are all other living things
Which though the day disjoin by several flight,
The quiet evening yet together brings,
And each returns unto his love at night.
O thou that art so courteous unto all,
Why should'st thou, Night, abuse me only thus,
That every creature to his kind dost call,
And yet 't is thou dost only sever us?
Well could I wish it would be ever day,
If, when night comes, you bid me go away.

¹ I do not discuss here what relation this sonnet bears to Shakespeare's 144th sonnet, "Two loves I have, of comfort and despair," because discussion on the point cannot go beyond dogmatic assertion. Both sonnets appeared in 1599, and probably one was suggested by the other, but which by which? Mr. Lee says, *tout court*, "Even this sonnet is adapted from Drayton" (*Life*, p. 153, note). I should say, "Even this sonnet is adapted from Shakespeare!" On Mr. Lee's theory one has to believe that Shakespeare built up his whole sonnet subject of "a man right fair" and "a woman colour'd ill" from this germ sonnet, for which he was indebted to a suggestion from Drayton. It may have been so, but one desiderates a grain of proof.

This is obviously built upon the same model as the following sonnet, published three years later, which in style is purely Shakespearean :

Why should your fair eyes with such sovereign grace
 Disperse their rays on every vulgar spirit,
 Whilst I in darkness in the self-same place
 Get not one glance to recompense my merit?
*So doth the plow-man gaze the wandering star,
 And only rests contented with the light ;
 That never learn'd what constellations are
 Beyond the bent of his unknowing sight.*
 O why should beauty, custom to obey,
 To their gross sense apply herself so ill?
 Would God I were as ignorant as they,
 When I am made unhappy by my skill ;
 Only compell'd on this poor good to boast —
 Heavens are not kind to them that know them most.

I do not think any one will have difficulty in detecting here the influence of the Shakespearean rhythm, especially in the last six lines. The second quatrain presents an often-remarked parallel with the second quatrain of Shakespeare's 116th sonnet :

O, no ! it is an ever-fixèd mark,
 That looks on tempests, and is never shaken ;
 It is the star to every wandering bark,
 Whose worth's unknown, although his height be taken.

Shakespeare's sonnets were not printed until 1609, and this sonnet of Drayton's appeared in 1605;¹ but for all that, if there has been borrowing (and the idea at a time when planetary influence was still believed in would not have been recondite), I cannot hold with Mr. Fleay and Mr. Lee that the borrower is Shakespeare. If there was borrowing, surely Shakespeare's manuscript would have been as accessible to Drayton as (according to Mr. Lee) Drayton's was to Shakespeare. However this may be, something very like the same idea, in a passage still more like the passage in Drayton, occurs in *Love's Labour's Lost* (I, i), the date of which cannot be subsequent to 1598:

¹ Mr. Wyndham in his beautiful edition of Shakespeare's sonnets takes the view of the relations of Drayton and Shakespeare that I believe to be sound; but his method of controversy is too dogmatic. He roundly asserts that all Drayton's sonnets that present a resemblance to Shakespeare's were posterior in date to the publication of Shakespeare's sonnets in 1609. The sonnet here in question, "Why should your fair eyes," printed in 1605, he assigns to 1619, as also on the same page of his book (257) another which appeared in 1599.

These earthly godfathers of heaven's lights
That give a name to every fixed star
Have no more profit of their shining nights
Than those who walk and wot not what they are.

But this is not the only passage that Shakespeare is said by the wise to have "conveyed" from his friend. Mr. Fleay published in his *Chronicle of the Stage* (ii, 226) a long and elaborate list of supposed plagiarisms, which I should prefer not to characterise. It will be sufficient to cite one specimen. Drayton writes in a sonnet:

Whilst thus my pen strives to eternise thee,
Age rules my lines with wrinkles on my face,

meaning that Age, in its turn, takes up a pen and rules lines on the poet's brow for a sonnet the reverse of "eternising." Now, because Shakespeare in a sonnet has the words

When hours have drain'd his blood and fill'd his brow
With lines and wrinkles,

where the word "lines" has an entirely different sense from that which it bears in the other passage, it is alleged that Shakespeare has been copying Drayton; it being, on this theory, quite incredible that the greatest poet of his age could have brought together without outside suggestion two ideas so remote from each other as the "lines" and the "wrinkles" on an aged face.

Neglecting, however, all questions of word borrowing, which can seldom be conclusively settled, I prefer to rest my case on the broader ground of style. I would ask any one to whom the Shakespearean rhythm is distinct and familiar to read Drayton's last sonnets, especially "You best discerned of my interior eyes," "Like an adventurous seafarer am I," "To nothing better can I thee compare," "Some misbelieving and profane in love," above all, "Why should your fair eyes with such sovereign grace" and "Since there's no help, come let us kiss and part," and, if he detects, as he must, some fellowship, I would put to him this question, If a poet at one time could write so like Daniel that his "Clear Ankor, on whose silver-sanded shore" is as good and as characteristic of Daniel as any sonnet that charming writer ever produced, and at another time so not unlike Sidney that his "My heart was slain, and none but you and I" suggests at once the *Astrophel and Stella*, is it reasonable, when in turn we find him writing in the school of Shakespeare, that he should be accounted Shakespeare's master and not his pupil?

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